

January 22-23, 1998

Cindy Crawford and Chirac visit the Indian Himalayas

NEW DELHI (AP) — Two figures will be competing for the title of India's most beautiful woman in the annual beauty pageant competition. The winner will represent India at the Miss World pageant in London.

Hillary Clinton ignores case against husband by cleaning closet

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton says she is ignoring the scandalous case against her husband, President Bill Clinton, by cleaning his closet.

Spice Girls fans' stereo seized for annoying neighbors

MANCHESTER (AP) — A police officer has seized a Spice Girls stereo from a fan's home because it was too loud and annoying to the neighbors.

Cantona breaks comedy film

PARIS (AP) — A comedy film featuring Eric Cantona has been banned from theaters because it was considered disrespectful to the former footballer.

Swedish crown prince to study at Yale

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Swedish crown prince, Carl Philip, is to study at Yale University in the United States.

King returns home after Omra

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein returned to Amman at dawn Thursday after a brief visit to Saudi Arabia where he performed the Omra (lesser pilgrimage to Mecca). During the visit, King Hussein met Saudi King Fahd to discuss bilateral ties and developments in the Middle East peace process. The King, who was accompanied on the trip by members of the Royal family, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh and other officials, also visited the Prophet Mohammad's tomb and the tombs of the prophet's companions in Medina and Bugei as well as the tomb of the martyr Hamzeh Ben Abdul Muttaleb. At hand, to meet the King upon his return, was His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, speakers of Parliament and senior officials.

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Arafat denounces Israel's 2% withdrawal offer as 'peanuts'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat dismissed Israel's offer for a West Bank withdrawal as "peanuts" Friday but vowed to stay the course and work to revive the peace process.

"What he's offering is peanuts. We cannot accept it," Mr. Arafat said at a news conference referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal for the long-overdue pullback.

According to Mr. Arafat, Mr. Netanyahu told U.S. officials he would be willing to pull back from two per cent of West Bank territory in the first phase of the withdrawal.

"We rejected that," Mr. Arafat said.

The Palestinian leader held two meetings with U.S. President Bill Clinton Thursday to discuss proposals to break a 10-month deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

Under the U.S. plan, Israel would make a phased withdrawal from West Bank territory in tandem with Palestinian steps to combat violence by extremists.

But Mr. Clinton failed during talks with Mr. Netanyahu Tuesday to convince him to agree to a "significant" withdrawal from the West Bank that his aides reportedly have said should be in the "double digits" in terms of the percentage of territory ceded.

Mr. Arafat insisted that Mr. Netanyahu must abide by signed agreements that provide for the Israeli withdrawal from territories that would be placed under the control of his Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"He has to respect the Palestinian people... He has to respect what has been signed," Mr. Arafat said.

Despite his visible frustration with the Israeli premier's stance, Mr. Arafat indicated he was willing to give the United States a chance to bridge the gap.

"We appreciate the American efforts being exerted... to protect and revive the peace process," Mr. Arafat said. "Thus we have to follow up with the American sponsor and join him in his efforts."

He also said he would support efforts by "the Europeans, the Arabs, the Norwegians, the Russians and others" to try to relaunch peace talks. The Palestinians have insisted Israel conduct a West Bank withdrawal which would give them control over 90 per cent of the West Bank — compared to the 27 per cent now under full or partial Palestinian control.

During talks Thursday, Mr. Clinton told Mr. Arafat that he must be "relentless" in fighting terror and laid out the proposal for "parallel steps" by Israel and the Palestinians to restore confidence. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said.

Mr. Arafat was to meet with Ms. Albright later in the day before his return to Gaza and was also scheduled to confer with the U.S. State Department's Middle East coordinator, Dennis Ross.

Ms. Albright is hoping to schedule a new round of talks with the leaders next month that could lead to a summit between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu.



Dr. Saeb Erekat, translating, listens to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat during a news conference on Friday in Washington. Mr. Arafat rejected as 'peanuts' Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's offer of a limited pullback on the West Bank (AP photo)

PNA agrees to compromise on annulling PLO Charter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — In a nod to Israel, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is ready to convene key Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders who would affirm that all sections of the PLO Charter calling for Israel's destruction are null and void, a Palestinian official said Friday.

However, Israel rejected the idea.

Mr. Arafat made the offer in talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton on Thursday, said a member of Mr. Arafat's delegation, Planning Minister Nabil Shaath.

Mr. Shaath suggested that Mr. Clinton supported the

Palestinian idea. "After discussing this issue [with the Americans], we reached a middle ground," Mr. Shaath said in a telephone interview from Washington.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has

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Israel committed to construction of Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given an unequivocal commitment to continue building a new Jewish settlement in occupied Arab east Jerusalem, Jerusalem's Israeli Mayor Ehud Olmert said on Friday.

The move underscored Mr. Netanyahu's intention to ignore a U.S. call for a "time-out" to Jewish settlement activity in order to help revive the fragile peace process with the Palestinians.

"The prime minister on several occasions in recent days reiterated in a manner that cannot be understood in more than one way that the government of Israel will continue building the infrastructure at Har Homa," Mr. Olmert told

Olmert shows off projects in Jerusalem's Arab sector

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem's hardline mayor on Friday showed off a \$149 million effort to fix up Arab neighbourhoods, but critics said this was not enough to make up for years of systematic neglect.

A four-year plan launched in May sets aside \$37.5 million a year for improving roads and repairing water and sewage lines. The city also decided to approve the construction of 3,500 more homes in the eastern sector where 180,000 Palestinians live, many in crowded conditions.

Mayor Ehud Olmert said Friday that Israel could not only focus on Jewish neighbourhoods, which have a population of 422,000. "We have sovereignty over the whole city and we need to concern ourselves with all areas of the city," said Mr. Olmert, a leading figure in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party. Mr. Olmert took Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman and reporters on a tour of the sites under renovation in the eastern sector.

Critics said much more needed to be done to make up for years of systematic neglect. Arab neighbourhoods receive

(Continued on page 7)

3 Israeli soldiers, Lebanese civilian wounded

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Hizbollah guerrillas wounded three Israeli soldiers on Friday in attacks against the buffer zone occupied by Israel in south Lebanon, security sources said.

Israel responded by pounding suspected Hizbollah positions north of the zone with artillery and air raids, wounding a civilian and damaging several houses, Lebanese police said.

Guerrillas from the Islamic Resistance, the armed wing of Hizbollah, targeted an Israeli position at Sojud on the edge of the central sector of the occupied zone, the security sources said.

A Hizbollah statement said a fierce fire-fight erupted between its guerrillas and Israeli forces inside the Sojud position and an Israeli patrol outside, causing "deaths within the enemy's ranks." Two Israeli soldiers were wounded in the clash, security sources said.

A third Israeli soldier was wounded when Hizbollah attacked the same Sojud position several hours later, they added. In response, Israeli artillery bombarded locations near Sojud in the Iqlim Al Tuffah region.

An Israeli fighter-bomber also fired a missile near Okmata in the Iqlim Al Tuffah region, they said.

A Lebanese civilian, identified as 30-year-old Mohammad Ali Al Jawad, was wounded by shrapnel in the stomach and legs while he was in his house in Jarjuh, police said.

U.N. Security Council warned on Iraq; response expected next week

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The top U.N. weapons inspector for Iraq on Friday warned the U.N. Security Council of Iraq's apparent policy decision to end all cooperation with U.N. monitors.

Although British and U.S. ambassadors reacted with dismay to the report by Richard Butler, Western diplomats said that no formal council response to the Iraqi stalling is expected until U.S. President Bill Clinton calls the main players over the weekend.

Mr. Clinton has not ruled out the use of force to punish Iraq for failing to provide full

and unconditional access to the U.N. inspectors in line with U.N. demands, and says Washington will act alone if necessary.

In a significant shift, France on Friday publicly rejected Iraqi proposals for a moratorium on weapons inspections of certain sites, announced during talks between Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Mr. Butler, the U.N. chief weapons inspector.

France, along with Russia and China, has in the past expressed support for Iraqi positions and notably backed Iraqi calls to dilute the U.S. and British presence in the

report to the U.N. Security Council distributed late Thursday and found it "very disturbing."

British Ambassador Sir John Weston emerged from the Security Council after hearing Mr. Butler, saying his report was "deeply disappointing."

He told reporters: "This is a very serious and direct challenge to the Security Council because in effect in my opinion it amounts to a definitive rejection of the U.N. Security Council resolutions on which this whole operation is based."

(Continued on page 7)

Two killed in Algiers bomb blast

ALGIERS (AFP) — Two people who were believed to be carrying a bomb were killed by an explosion in the Algerian capital shortly before midday prayers on Friday, residents said. "The two were walking side by side," a witness said after the blast blew a small crater in one of the steep flights of steps that make up the streets of Frais Vallon district above the city. At least five people died in other bomb explosions in or near Algiers earlier this week. The deadliest, on Tuesday, claimed four lives in the nearby town of Zeralda, according to officials. Local people put the death toll at seven. Another bomb killed one person and wounded 23 in the district of Ben Aknoun above the capital.

Tarawneh forwards King's message of support to Arafat

WASHINGTON (Petra) — Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh Friday voiced His Majesty King Hussein's support for the efforts made by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to achieve progress on the Palestinian-Israeli track and to overcome the current stalemate in peacemaking.

At a meeting here, Dr. Tarawneh discussed with President Arafat bilateral relations and the deadlock it has reached as a result of Israeli intransigence and its stubborn position.

In a statement to Petra, Dr. Tarawneh said King Hussein has asked him to meet with President Arafat and voiced his support for his efforts to

overcome the obstacles facing the peace process.

Dr. Tarawneh said President Arafat briefed him on the outcome of his meetings with U.S. President Bill Clinton and senior U.S. officials, which focused on troop redeployment in the West Bank, and the pending issues which have not been implemented during the interim stage negotiations. Dr. Tarawneh added that President Arafat informed him of the Palestinian position, stressing the need for adherence to the provisions of the Oslo and Hebron agreements, as a prelude to final status talks.

Dr. Tarawneh pointed out that he will meet with senior

State Department officials and will discuss the outcome of the meetings between President Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Clinton and senior U.S. officials, with a view to conducting an overall assessment of the situation.

The meeting with President Arafat was attended by Jordan's Ambassador in Washington Marwan Muasher, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee member, Mahmoud Abbas, and director of the PLO office in Washington, Hassan Abdul Rahman.

No suspects held over Rabia murder case — Rashid

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid denied Friday news reports that five suspects were arrested last week in connection with the slayings of six Iraqis, including the charge d'affaires at the Iraqi embassy in Amman.

On Thursday, the Arab Al Yawm daily newspaper said that at least five Iraqis were arrested in Safawi, 190 kilometres east of Amman, near the Jordan-Iraq border.

"This is baseless information," said Mr. Rashid. "Such distorted news affects the work of investigators and harms their work."

"The investigation is over and there is a direction to ban publishing any information about the case without the permission of the prosecutor general," the minister told the Jordan Times.

Last week, two Iraqi businessmen, Sami George and Nimir Ouchi, were among eight killed in Al Rabia by unidentified masked men. Two Egyptians were among those killed in the attack.

A Greek woman, Anastasia Lidaki, was the only survivor of the attack.

Informal sources told the Jordan Times that the fingerprints of ten different people were

found at George's house, where the crime took place.

They said that the results of fingerprint experts will be completed today "which will help in identifying those behind the attack," the sources said.

The fingerprints, according to the sources, were found in the bathroom, salon and on the mirrors at the house and on the car of Hajou, which was used as a getaway car by the assailants.

The sources added that the criminal court prosecutor, Emad Keilani, was expected to hear the testimony of the Greek woman who is still at King Hussein Medical Centre after she is discharged from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

They added that the inclination among the investigators is that Hajou was accidentally murdered by the attackers who apparently were targeting Ouchi and George.

"When police arrived at the scene they discovered that nothing had been stolen from the house. Even the gold that was found there was not touched by the attackers," said the sources.

"The two businessmen had many enemies and also disputes between themselves," the sources said.

"Investigators believe now that the crime was carried out by a Mafia of well-trained killers who are capable of killing many

people in cold blood," they added.

"The killer may have been hired by businessmen who are not on good terms with the two Iraqis," the sources said.

The sources added that written warrants were given to police to search more houses and apartments in Amman in order to find the suspects.

"Apparently the attackers did not want to kill the two businessmen but maybe a quarrel occurred between the murderers and the attackers which led to the killing of all those present," added the sources.

They said that an Iraqi woman living behind the scene of the murder said that his house was open to all Iraqis to come at any time and he was very generous with them.

"Many Iraqis used to visit his house and he never turned them away," the Iraqi woman, whose name was not revealed, told the investigators.

The police have also interrogated a Jordanian attorney who was working with George, police sources said.

"The police believe that the interrogation of George's lawyer will reveal more information about the latter's business activities and those who were dealing with him, and above all, who have him most," the sources said.

Attorney general to move slander, national unity case against Abbadi

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The chief of the Higher Judiciary Council, Farouq Keilani, last week asked the attorney general to move a case against Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi for allegedly endangering national unity and slandering the judicial system.

Minister of Justice Riyad Shuka'a confirmed the move and denied earlier press reports that the government was suing the deputy.

"I did not file the lawsuit, and Mr. Keilani did not consult with me or tell me anything about the case before filing it," Dr. Shuka'a told the Jordan Times on Friday.

In a lengthy and often heated speech that was broadcast live on Jordan Television on Jan. 14, during the House's debate of the budget, Dr. Abbadi attacked the policies of the present and past governments, accusing them of nepotism, corruption and putting the wrong man in the wrong place.

Dr. Abbadi, a former police officer, kept interrupting his speech by waving documents that he alleged contained proves of corruption and mis-

management.

Dr. Abbadi, who cast a vote of confidence for the Cabinet of Abdul Salam Majali on Dec. 15 and voted in favour of the budget last week, lashed out at the government and many of its ministers and called on the government to stop granting citizenship to "the bedouins and citizens of neighbouring Arab countries" — an implicit reference to Palestinians who form a large percentage of the Kingdom's 4.5 million people.

In a statement issued Jan. 14, the government, without naming Dr. Abbadi, denounced the deputy's comments, which it said "deviated from the subject in discussion, did not tell the truth, threatened the country's national unity and used personal and offensive language when referring to public officials."

The statement also asked the House to take the necessary measures to preserve Jordan's democratic process.

Responding to the statement, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour said he was "surprised" by the statement and stated that lawmakers have the right to express themselves under the dome of Parliament.

Both Dr. Abbadi's speech and the government's statement generated a barrage of criticism from many deputies.

On the street, many ordinary Jordanians said they were shocked by parts of the speech that questioned citizenship rights, attacked ministers and the intelligence department as well as other institutions. Newspaper columnists were divided, between those who upheld Dr. Abbadi's right to express his opinion and those who thought that his speech was damaging to national unity.

Meanwhile, Dr. Abbadi on Wednesday told the Jordan Times that he was not officially informed of the lawsuit.

He added that he "did not believe the government" would actually file a lawsuit against him due to the implications and consequences of such a case.

"By filing a lawsuit, the government would be challenging Parliament and infringing on the Constitution," he said.

If the court decides to look into the case, Dr. Abbadi's parliamentary immunity has to be lifted. The House will have to decide by an absolute majority whether to allow the deputy to be prosecuted or not.

Quarter of a million Palestinians attend Friday prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — More than a quarter of a million Palestinians held prayers in Al Aqsa Mosque compound under heavy Israeli security for the last Friday of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Sheikh Mohammad Hussein, in his sermon, said the turnout was "a clear message to the [Israeli] occupiers that Quds will belong only to its true people."

"We have heard the siren warning of the dangers which threaten our city, from the destruction of homes and the building of settlements, while Jerusalem's people live in

suffering," said Sheikh Hussein, the deputy director of Al Aqsa.

Israeli police estimated that 250,000 Palestinians attended the prayers at the Al Aqsa compound, the third holiest site in Islam located in Jerusalem's Old City, while Al Aqsa officials put the number above 300,000.

Several worshippers had to be taken away in ambulances after being hurt in the crush as the crowds left the mosque compound after prayers, witnesses said.

Several thousand police reinforcements were deployed around the Old City "to prevent terrorist

attacks either by Jewish right-wingers or by Palestinian groups," said a police spokesman.

Before Ramadan began in late December, police arrested two Jewish militants who allegedly planned to desecrate Al Aqsa by throwing a pig's head onto the compound during Ramadan prayers.

But the prayers passed without incident, as they have the past three Fridays which saw similar crowds.

Israel opened army checkpoints for several hours in the morning to allow thousands of Palestinians aged above 45 or below 16 to enter Jerusalem

without permits along with some 25,000 West Bankers who have permits to enter Israel for work, said an army spokesman.

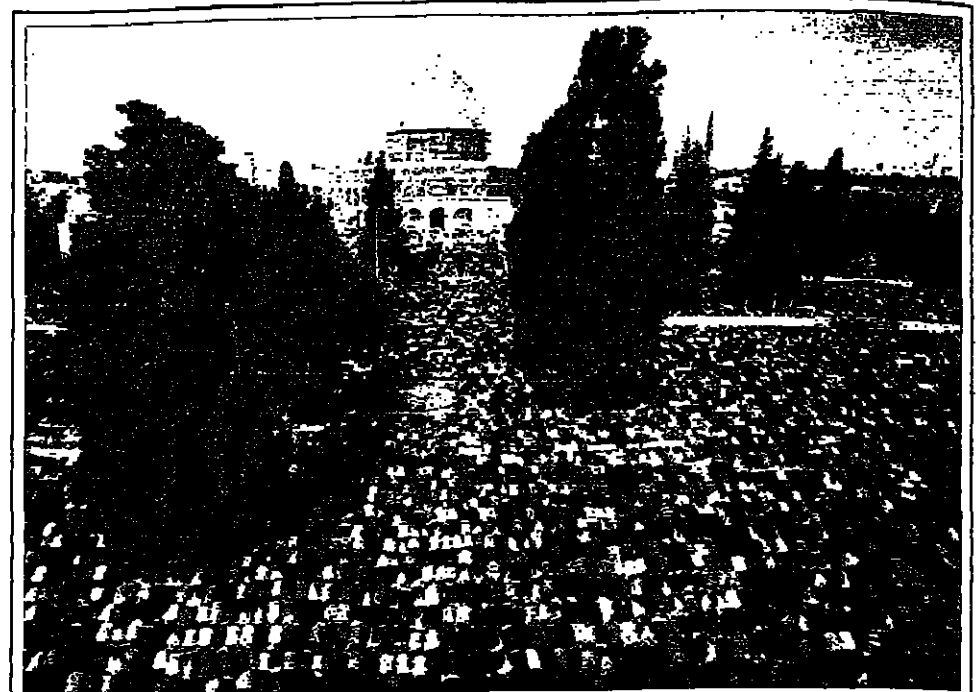
Some 34,000 more Palestinians, most workers with permits, also came through Israeli checkpoints from the Gaza Strip to attend the prayer sermon, the spokesman said.

Thousands of others slipped around checkpoints into Jerusalem, witnesses said. Four youths were detained at the checkpoint outside Bethlehem for trying to sneak past, witnesses said.

Jerusalem has been closed to West Bank Palestinians

since January 1996, the longest in a string of closures imposed since 1994.

The Al Aqsa Mosque compound is located on the site of the Jewish Temple, destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The Western Wall, the temple's only remains, is located directly below Al Aqsa and is Judaism's holiest site. On Monday, Muslims will celebrate Lailat Al Qadar, the holiday marking the first revelation of Islam's Koran Holy Book to the Prophet Mohammad before Ramadan and its daily sunrise to sunset fast ends on Wednesday.



FRIDAY PRAYERS AT AL AQSA: Thousands of Palestinians on Friday bow in prayer from Al Aqsa Mosque to beyond the golden Dome of the Rock. Over 250,000 Palestinian worshippers filled Islam's third holiest site on the last Friday of Muslim prayers of the Holy Month of Ramadan (Reuters photo)

Iranian leaders intensify attack on Israel on 'Quds Day'

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian leaders intensified their hostile line against Israel as demonstrations were held throughout the country on Friday to mark International Quds (Jerusalem) Day.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who took office in August promising to ease tensions with other countries, personally attended a large rally in Tehran and marched among people, but did not deliver a speech.

His bodyguards watched helplessly as he was swarmed by enthusiastic crowds seeking to touch and kiss him.

Former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani delivered an acerbic speech against Israel at Tehran University, criticizing Arab leaders for seeking peace with the Jewish state.

He said Iran would take their place in carrying "the sacred banner" of the fight against Israel, and voiced regret over "the deception, lethargy and feebleness which marks the Arab World" with respect to Israel.

"Iran is willing to carry the banner of the sacred path and accepts the consequences. But on the condition that Arab countries do not stab us in the back," he said as the crowd chanted: "Death to Israel," and "Death to America."

"The Arab World should risk its wealth and lives for this

cause, as Iran has. Don't let the Americans and Western countries deceive you," he said referring to the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process. "It is a pity that some Arab countries feel closer to the enemy than to Iran," said Mr. Rafsanjani, who is a top adviser to the Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

He attacked the United States particularly for supplying Israel last week with the first of two F-15I long-range strike aircraft, capable of hitting targets in Iran and Iraq.

"They deliver aircraft to Israel to infiltrate the Muslim World, while preventing others from procuring weapons," he said referring to a U.S. drive to halt the transfer of weapons technology to the Islamic Republic.

The conservative speaker of parliament, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, was equally uncompromising in his speech to the crowd.

"We are for peace in the Middle East, but what the West is seeking is not peace, it is reason. They want to cheat the Muslims again, like they have done many times in the past," he said. "This is a political game and we are opposed to such games."

He attacked "hypocritical" Western governments for "closing their eyes to the oppression and injustice in Palestine."

The stepped-up attack against the West came amid pressure on

Mr. Khatami to stick to the principal guidelines of the 1979 revolution, notably hostility towards arch-enemies Israel and the United States.

The crowd marched in the streets around the university shouting slogans against the United States and Israel and burning the Israeli flag.

The state-run radio and television repeatedly broadcast footage of Mr. Khatami's speech at the mausoleum of the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in which he called for a massive public turnout for the rally.

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran has held the event on the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan each year in solidarity with the "oppressed" Palestinian people.

The Iranian media, notably television, have repeatedly played anti-Israeli films and scenes of Israeli "acts of brutality" in the occupied Palestinian territories and south Lebanon in recent days.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement Thursday urging Arab and Muslim countries to "contain and isolate Israel to help bring peace and stability to the Middle East."

Iran, which refuses to recognize Israel, is opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace process and calls for the destruction of the Jewish state.

Iraq hails success of 'shock' tactics with U.N. inspectors

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Friday said its policy of using shock tactics in its confrontation with U.N. arms inspectors was reaping dividends and its strategy had exposed American plotting.

"The decision to ban Americans from the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with Iraqi disarmament from entering Iraq was the culmination of Iraqi shock tactics," said the official Al Thawra newspaper.

Iraq expelled all U.S. nationals working for UNSCOM in November, before allowing them to return a week later, and earlier this month it refused all cooperation with an UNSCOM team led by former U.S. Marine Scott Ritter on the grounds that he was spying for Washington.

"The decision to ban Scott Ritter and the shock tactics have caused American dreams to collapse and attracted the attention of the international community," added the paper.

"Iraq's shock tactics have contributed effectively to waking up the international community and the Arab World, allowing them to see the dangers of American policies," said Al Thawra.

Iraq has been involved in a stand-off with U.N. inspectors over the issue of access to presidential sites for three months, and last week Iraqi President Saddam Hussein threatened to set a six-month deadline for UNSCOM to complete its work.

Baghdad accuses UNSCOM of being dominated by the United States and Britain, the two Security Council members most strongly opposed to any lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Under the terms of the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire, UNSCOM must certify that Iraq no longer has weapons of mass destruction before the sanctions can be lifted.

Iraq insists it has met all its disarmament requirements and that U.S. inspectors in UNSCOM are provoking crises to keep the embargo in place indefinitely.

UNSCOM chief Richard Butler is expected to brief the U.N. Security Council in New York on Friday about his talks in Baghdad earlier in the week, which failed to persuade Iraq to comply with U.N. demands for access to presidential sites.

Hizbollah calls for bringing intifada 'back on the streets'

BEIRUT (AFP) — More than 20,000 followers of the Hizbollah movement marked Iran's international day of solidarity with Jerusalem on Friday by calling for a resumption of the intifada uprising against Israel.

"We have lost hope in the [Middle East] peace process. The intifada should be back on the streets," Hizbollah Secretary General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah told a rally of more than 10,000 followers in Beirut's southern suburbs.

"All the Arab and Islamic nations should help the Palestinian people to make the choice of armed resistance, the only path it has. The Palestinian people have no other choice but the stone and the knife," he said.

Sheikh Nasrallah accused Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of

being "Jewish plotters." Across the country Hizbollah held similar rallies to mark International Quds Day.

The solidarity day was declared by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the 1979 Islamist revolution in Iran.

Hizbollah scouts, relief workers and unarmed guerrillas paraded through the streets of southern Beirut to shouts of "Death to Israel" and "Death to America."

Guerrillas wearing military fatigues stepped on Israeli and U.S. flags, and waved banners reading: "Israel should be eradicated from the globe" and "The American great Satan and the Israeli cancerous tumour will always be our enemies."

The fighters of the Islamic Resistance, Hizbollah's military arm which spearheads the guer-

rilla war to oust Israel from southern Lebanon, also performed military manoeuvres, simulating the liberation of Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem while shouting: "Jerusalem, we are coming."

Hizbollah followers also paraded with effigies of the remains of the 12 Israeli soldiers killed during a failed Israeli commando operation in southern Lebanon in September.

Crowds cheered in the southern city of Tyre as the fighters carried a large bloody Israeli military boot hit by shrapnel and a wooden Israeli Merkava tank hit by a Hizbollah Sagger rocket.

Israel occupied Arab east Jerusalem, the site of Islam's third holiest shrine, in 1967.

Iran appoints new ambassador to Turkey

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has appointed a new ambassador to Turkey ending a year-long diplomatic crisis between the two neighbours, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Friday.

Mohammad Hossein Lavasani, 51, was given the post formerly occupied by Mohammad Reza Bagheri, who was expelled by Ankara along with three other Iranian diplomats last February for alleged interference in Turkey's domestic

affairs.

Iran retaliated by ordering out Turkey's Ambassador Osman Korunkut and the consul general in the northwestern town of Orumieh.

The new envoy was vice-consul at Iran's embassy in the United States for a few months before Tehran and Washington severed diplomatic relations in 1980. He was also a deputy foreign minister from 1986 to 1988, and an ambassador to Canada from 1989 to 1994.

Earlier this month, Turkey named Sencer Ozsoy as its new ambassador to Iran.

The Islamic Republic has had tense relations with the secular government in Turkey over ideological issues. Iran is particularly angry over a recent bid by Turkey to boost military cooperation with Israel.

Mr. Lavasani's predecessor had told a gathering organised by the mayor of an Ankara suburb that "victory will come to Islam across the world."

Iraqi foreign minister ends Iran visit

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Al Sahhaf ended his week-long visit to Iran Friday after agreeing to set up joint commissions to tackle outstanding problems preventing normalisation of ties, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported.

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi told IRNA the commissions were making "positive progress" in solving issues relating to prisoners

from the two countries' 1980-1988 war and those missing in action.

Tehran and Baghdad were also making headway on the issue of pilgrimages to Iraq's holy sites by Iranian citizens and other issues related to the war, he said.

"The committees will seriously continue work until they reach a conclusion," Mr. Kharazi said.

The two countries agreed Monday to set up the commis-

sions.

In late August, Baghdad offered to allow Iranians to visit Iraq after a 17-year travel ban, but Tehran rejected the initiative as a publicity stunt and called for official negotiations on the issue first.

Mr. Sahhaf had been due to leave Iran Monday but extended his stay in order to meet Iranian President Mohammed Khatami.

Israeli court keeps Jewish extremist accused in 'pig plot' in jail

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli supreme court on Friday reversed a lower court decision to release on bail a Jewish extremist accused of planning to throw a pig's head onto Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, judicial sources said.

The supreme court ordered that Avigdor Askin, ordered released on Wednesday, temporarily remain in detention until it decides whether he should remain in prison until his trial, the sources said.

The public prosecutor had appealed the decision by the Jerusalem district court after it released Askin on \$140,000 bail and gave him permission to leave the country due to his business interests in Russia.

Russian-born Askin, charged with "incitement to violence," is accused of planning to hurl a pig's head on to the Al Aqsa compound during prayers in the Holy Month of Ramadan, which ends Jan. 27.

The pig is considered an unclean animal in both Islam and Judaism, and security officials have said Avigdor planned to spark Muslim-Jewish violence with the incident.

The lower court on Wednesday ordered Avigdor's colleague, Damian Pakovich, held in prison. Police say Avigdor planned the plot and Pakovich was to carry it out.

Pakovich also faces trial for putting a pig's head on the grave of Izzeddin Al Qassem, a Palestinian leader killed in the fight against the British mandate who is revered by

Hamas, and for burning an office of an Israeli pro-peace group.

Askin, who is linked to the banned racist group Kach, was sentenced in June to four months in prison for calling the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin just before his 1995 assassination by another Jewish extremist.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Twinkle
14:30French Programmes
16:15Prayers
16:30Believe and Behave
17:00NBA
18:00Neighbours
18:30News Headlines
18:35You Bet Your Life
19:00Le Journal
19:15Ramadan Talks
19:35Perspective
20:00Cinema Cinema
20:30Prism
21:10Time Trax
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Born to Be Sick"
23:59Country Music

PRAYER TIMES

05:09Fajr
06:30(Sunrise) Doha
11:48Dhuhr
14:41Asr
17:06Maghreb
18:26Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 633541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

Under the effect of a cold air mass and a depression to last for two days, temperatures are expected to drop with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. Rain-fall is expected in the northern parts of the Kingdom gradually extending to cover all other areas with winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, winds northerly moderate and seas choppy.

Min./Max. temp.05/12
Aqaba10/20
Deserts04/13
Jordan Valley09/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 35 per cent. Aqaba 23 per cent.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Dr. Hisham Kan'an790286
Dr. Khaddouf Asfour699440
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdous pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Nairookh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir276852
Al Quds pharmacy(---)
ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad985550
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192621111.
637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain623029
Dr. Ghaleb Zawadeh736011

Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 4453200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 4453200

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192621111.
637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800

Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muassir Hospital672279
The Islamic, Abdali 666136/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhsin777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323
Zarqa National Hospital09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital09990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02275555
Greek Catholic Hospital02272775
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital02247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital03314111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn644281/6
Aklleh Maternity, J. Amn642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karschi, Dubai (RJ)
10:10Damascus, Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
19:10London, Frankfurt (RJ)
20:45Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:15Bangkok (RJ)

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
11:30Frankfurt, Paris (RJ)
11:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Milan Madrid (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
15:45Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:20Larnaca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
22:30Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

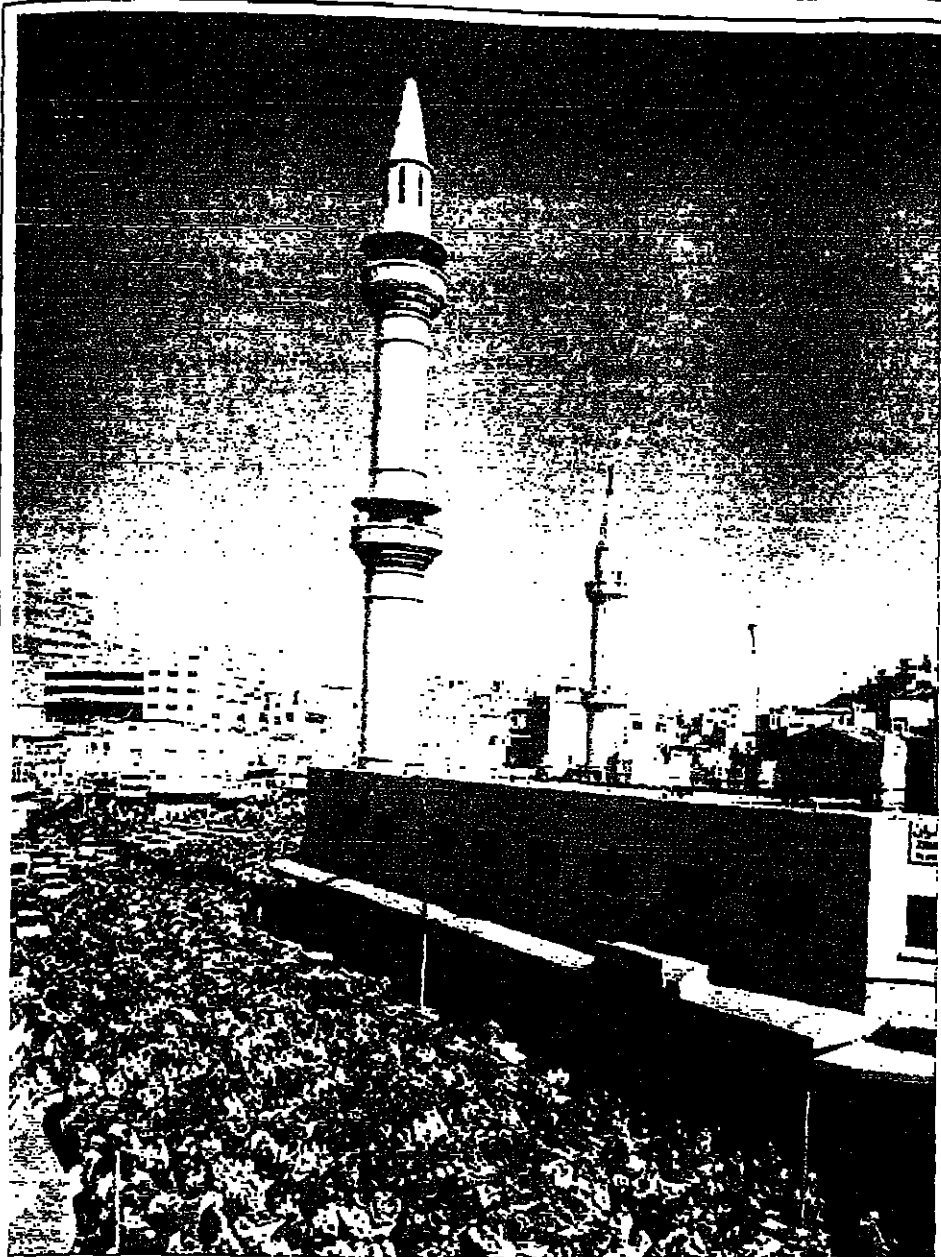
DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karschi, Dubai (RJ)
10:10Damascus, Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
19:10London, Frankfurt (RJ)
20:45Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:15Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights
07:00Beirut (ME)
10:30Al 'Arish (Marka Airport) (PF)
14:15Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:00Dubai (EK)
23:35Damascus, Paris (AF)
23:55Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (AZ)
04:20Rome (OA)

Other Flights

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)



FRIDAY PRAYERS AT AL HUSSEIN: Thousands of worshippers pray in the streets near Al Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman on the last Friday of the Holy Month of Ramadan (AFP photo)

Kingdom maintains close relations with Iraq, Syria — prime minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has described Jordan's relations with Iraq and Syria as intimate, despite recent developments, and the Kingdom's ties with Saudi Arabia as excellent.

In a wide-ranging interview with Radio Monte Carlo, the prime minister said "we give continuous support to the Iraqi people and seek to lift the sanctions imposed on them in order to end their sufferings. We have intimate ties with our Syrian brothers although sometimes we differ in our positions towards a particular issue," the prime minister said, adding that "differing on a certain issue does not mean hostility." He described Jordan's relations with Saudi Arabia as excellent and continually progressing.

The prime minister said Jordan respects the peace treaty it signed with Israel in 1994, but "we feel that the present Israeli leadership has halted the peace process, and this is something harmful to the whole region in general and the Palestinians in particular. We feel the present situation needs addressing and we hope that the Israeli leadership will return to peace negotiations on all tracks and implement all the peace accords. Otherwise, mutual

confidence will be shaken."

Asked to explain His Majesty King Hussein's harsh words towards the Iraqi leadership, the prime minister said "King Hussein's stand is quite clear vis-à-vis the issue. When he learned of the execution of four Jordanians by a sister Arab state because they smuggled spare auto parts, his pain and his expression of this pain were justified."

In reply to a question about the manner in which Iraq released Jordanian prisoners held there, the prime minister said "we spoke with all clarity before Parliament about our quest to secure the release of the Jordanian prisoners in Iraq. The King, the Crown Prince and the government all demanded their release and the Crown Prince talked to the Iraqis during the Tehran summit about this issue and they promised us that they would release them. But, regrettably, we learnt of their release through the media and did not receive a notification in advance. It was a total disregard of official Jordanian efforts and the release was carried out in a manner that was not in harmony with the norm."

When asked about the motives behind the assassination attempts on Iraqis in Jordan, the prime minister

replied: "The first attempt, which is now being examined by a Jordanian court, was a result of a family feud and the culprits are in jail. That attack was not politically motivated. As for the subsequent murder of the Iraqis, we are still investigating the case but we are surprised that the release of the Jordanian prisoners from Iraqi jails immediately followed the mass murder in Amman. However, so far we have no conclusive indications of the motive."

Asked to comment on Syria's displeasure over Jordan's attendance at the Turkish-Israeli-American military exercises, the prime minister said "Turkey was an ally of all the countries in the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf war and we had been invited by Turkey to attend. We would not have attended as an observer had the exercises been directed against an Arab country. But some Arab states believe that this [our attendance] was not appropriate. We are a sovereign country that respects other countries' sovereignty and we are convinced that the exercise was not levelled against any Arab state. The exercises did not mark the birth of a new military alliance in the region and we are not part of any alliance."

The prime minister added that Jordan was invited to the exercises before there were signs of tension in the region. He added that Jordan expects others to respect its sovereignty.

The prime minister said Jordan did not contact Damascus to explain its position "because the whole issue was not one of great importance. All that happened was a Jordanian officer watched rescue operations. We benefit from such operations because we always face problems with vessels in Aqaba in which injuries occur and we have no experience in maritime rescue operations."

Asked whether Jordan is satisfied with Israel's application of the peace treaty, the prime minister said "we are committed to carrying out our part and we have regained our right to water resources. However, the Israelis have been slow in implementing the rest of the agreements and it worries us to see Israel building more settlements, because such action is very harmful to Jordan."

Stating that there are obstacles to peace, the prime minister also said the peace process is slow because it is complicated and requires more time and effort. He

added that "those who reject the idea of peace resort to anything to place these obstacles in the path of peace."

He said the Arabs want peace but a minority of Israelis are creating these obstacles.

Dr. Majali stressed that peace and security are closely linked, but he said security should be guaranteed for all parties.

Asked about Western countries' stands vis-à-vis the Palestinian issue, the prime minister said Western countries stand behind Israel should it face any danger but these countries are now exerting serious efforts to achieve a peace settlement and are trying to pressure Israel into accepting peace.

As for Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the prime minister said "they are excellent and unique. We have been full partners with the Palestinians, we are the largest host of Palestinian refugees and we have kept the bridges open with the Palestinians since the 1967 war, allowing the Palestinian people free access to Jordan. We feel that anything affecting them has the same result on us and therefore we are trying to help them regain their rights to an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital."

Iraq wants good ties with Jordan — Shbeilat

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan Engineers Association President Leith Shbeilat has said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein told him that Baghdad wants to maintain good relations with Amman.

"The Iraqi president told me that he wants to keep good relations with Jordan," Mr. Shbeilat told reporters Thursday upon his return from a mission in Baghdad to mediate in the release of Jordanian prisoners in Iraq.

The list of those freed included 68 prisoners, 12 of whom were facing legal proceedings on different charges. Two women were among those freed from Abu Ghraib jail, 40 kilometres west of Baghdad.

Another 19 Jordanians were freed but remained in Iraq with their families, Mr. Shbeilat said.

Most of these prisoners were jailed for smuggling charges and other minor offences, but Mr. Shbeilat said Iraq told him that some of those freed were jailed for spying for Israel. He did not elaborate.

Among those released was Ammar Ghalib Shihabiddine, who was on death row for smuggling spare car parts.

Mr. Shbeilat met with the Iraqi president, who ordered the release of all Jordanian prisoners, including those accused of espionage, he said.

"I asked him on behalf of the Jordanian people to release these prisoners, including those charged with espionage. He immediately agreed and ordered that all Jordanian detainees be freed and proceedings against those on trial in Iraq be stopped," Mr. Shbeilat stated.

Mr. Shbeilat, a former member of Parliament, charged that he was subjected to maltreatment from police when he arrived at the border.

"I expected an official welcome from the government but instead I received a military welcome," Mr. Shbeilat said.

"They confiscated my passport, prevented Iraqi officials, as well as an Iraqi TV crew, from entering Jordan, and used violence against some of us," he added.

He said some police officers told him that they "had orders to use violence against me if necessary."

Mr. Shbeilat, who was detained for a few hours at a police station but later released, said "this treatment was unjustified and childish."

He charged that the government did not exert enough effort to secure the release of the prisoners "but used provocative language and a superior and contemptuous manner with the

Iraqis," a charge denied by the government.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Thursday said Jordan had exerted all efforts for the release of the prisoners, especially following the executions of four Jordanians.

"His Majesty King Hussein, Crown Prince Hassan, the prime minister, and other officials spared no efforts to obtain the release of these prisoners," Dr. Majali told the Paris-based Radio Monte Carlo on Thursday.

"Our efforts culminated following the executions and during the Islamic conference in Tehran, at which time Prince Hassan met with the Iraqi vice president," added Dr. Majali.

"We talked to them and suggested that it was the proper time to console the Jordanian people...and set the prisoners free," Dr. Majali said.

"They promised to free them, but unfortunately this did not happen and the release took place only two days ago. We heard the news from TV and radio stations without prior notification," he added.

"Even their excuse [not to inform us] was not acceptable to us, because they ignored all our efforts to free them," he added.

Dr. Majali said it was strange that the release of Jordanian prisoners took place only after the murder

of six Iraqis in Amman, including the charge d'affaires and his wife.

"This matter raises a question on the timing of the release," Dr. Majali said.

However, Iraq officially informed Jordan on Wednesday that the decision to free the prisoners came before Mr. Shbeilat's visit to the country, a Jordanian official was quoted as saying by the Agence France Presse news agency. Mr. Shbeilat said there was no reason for the government to be angry at any popular attempt to release the prisoners.

He also said the Iraqi government was angry because of Jordan's repeated calls for "political change in Iraq."

"How do you expect Iraq to free our prisoners at a time when Jordanian officials are calling for political changes in Iraq and are giving the Iraqi opposition freedom to launch their campaign against the Iraqi government?" he asked.

Meanwhile, the Arabic daily Al Dustour on Friday quoted Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid as saying that not all Jordanian prisoners have been released from Iraq.

"A number of Jordanians are still in Iraqi prisons, some of them serving life sentences," he said.

New Palestinian affairs director to tour nation's refugee camps

AMMAN (Petra) — Ibrahim Badran, the director of the Department of Palestinian Affairs, today starts a series of visits to refugee camps around Jordan to inspect conditions and identify the residents' needs in terms of projects and services.

Dr. Badran's visits to the camps reflects the keen interest demonstrated by His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in refugees' issues and the government's concern to improve services to the refugees in Jordan.

Dr. Badran noted that the social safety package aims to improve the infrastructure of the camps and the living conditions of the refugees.

Refugee delegations from several camps in Jordan last week paid visits to Dr. Badran to congratulate him on his appointment last week to this post and discuss the work done by the camps' improvement committees.

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Jordan to mainstream gender issues in five-year development plan

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan, in an unprecedented move, plans to mainstream gender issues in 20 sectors under the 1998-2002 socio-economic development plan instead of dedicating one of its chapters to women issues, an official said Friday.

"Jordan will be a pioneer in this respect, though this is a very tough subject to tackle and to achieve," said Amal Sabbagh, secretary general of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW).

"But it is a very good start, and through the development plan, we can mainstream gender issues to eventually reach official areas here," she told the Jordan Times.

Various ministries are putting final touches to the upcoming development plan, one of a series of similar schemes first launched after the 1967 war.

Dr. Sabbagh said the JNCW suggested in December that women's issues be included in all sectors of the master plan, rather than dedicating one chapter to cover women's diverse issues.

Accordingly, HRH Princess Basma, the JNCW chairperson, formed a technical committee from commission members to look into means of how best to undertake this issue.

Earlier this month, the committee, Jordan's main policy platform for women, suggested appointing "technical women" to the already existing 20 sectoral committees to help incorporate relevant female issues and projects.

The officers will be guided by the Beijing Plan of Action, the National Strategy for Women, and the National Population Strategy in charting projects aimed at improving the lot of women in a male-dominated society.

"The JNCW has worked on the post-Beijing Jordanian Plan, with non-governmental organisations and governmental organisations, to formulate projects for women," said Dr. Sabbagh.

She was referring to the main declaration on women's advancement issued by a U.N.-sponsored conference held in Beijing in 1995.

Dr. Sabbagh said the drafting of the post-Beijing pro-

gramme was in its final stages and its projects will be incorporated in the 20 sectors.

The JNCW was launched in 1992 to define policies and study amendments to existing legislation to help remove discriminatory laws and by-laws impeding the advancement of women's causes. The Council of Ministers decreed the committee's mandate.

Princess Basma recently re-appointed a legal committee to work under the auspices of JNCW to pinpoint discriminatory legislation.

"The JNCW will suggest amendments to this legislation and will monitor implementation, ensuring that they benefit women," said Dr. Sabbagh.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

* Display of Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NAF) products at the NAF Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Jan. 31 (8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).

* Installation by Jordanian artist Ali Jabri (until Jan. 27). Also displaying contemporary Arab artist exhibition (until Jan. 27) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Al Weibdeh (Tel. 643251).

* Works by about a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).

Royal Wings (RW) No. 2, Jan. 24 (Sat.)

Officials say 'bird flu' no cause for alarm in Kingdom

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A recent outbreak of a deadly bird flu in Hong Kong has raised concern worldwide, but Jordanians have nothing to fear from the disease, according to a senior official.

"Jordan is totally free from the 'chicken flu' disease, thanks to the government's tight control on locally produced and imported chickens," Assad Abul Ragheb, director of the Veterinary Medicine Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, told the Jordan Times.

"No such cases have been registered in Jordan or in any neighbouring countries," he added.

The Hong Kong government last month ordered the slaughter of all chickens and a number of ducks, geese, pigeons, quails and partridges in the territory in a bid to stamp out the bird flu, which killed four people.

It also banned imports of chickens from the mainland until the operation to eradicate the H5N1 virus is complete.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said his department regularly inspects Jordan's 2,156 poultry farms, which produce around 100,000 tonnes of meat per annum. It also supervises Jordan's chicken slaughter houses.

In addition, the Ministry of Health tests samples taken from around 2,300 tonnes of frozen chicken imported by Jordan every

year, mainly from France and other European states.

The disease was thought to be limited to chickens, but there have been 20 confirmed and suspected cases in humans since May.

Many believe the slaughter could not eliminate bird flu completely. The H5N1 was first spotted in 1961 in Trens, South Africa, and there have been few instances when the disease was passed between humans.

Government begins drafting new penal code

AMMAN (Petra) — The government has begun drafting a new and integrated penal code for the Kingdom that takes modern principles and trends in imposing penalties into account.

Judge Kamel Said, a former professor of criminal law at the Uni-

versity of Jordan and present member of the Court of Cassation, said he was entrusted with the task by Minister of Justice Riyad Shakaa upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein, who takes a keen interest in judicial affairs and in developing judicial ser-

vices through modernising laws and legislation.

Dr. Said said he will ensure that the new law, which should be finalised in six months, will respond to the economic, political and social conditions in Jordan.

The judge said he expects to complete his mission before the six-month deadline. Once the new penal code has been finalised, he is to be entrusted with drawing up another draft law governing court procedures in Jordan, he added.

Mohammad Amin laid to rest

AMMAN (J.T.) — The body of the late Mohammad Amin, the secretary general of the Ministry of Information, was laid to rest at Sahab Cemetery on Friday after prayers at King Hussein Medical Centre's mosque, west of Amman.

The late Mr. Amin died of cancer Thursday at the age of 58. He had served at a number of posts within the Ministry of Information and had presented several programmes on Jordan Television dealing with social issues.

He held the posts of director of Jordan Television, director general of the Press and Publications Department, and secretary general of the Ministry of Information, a position he held until the time of his death.

His Majesty King Hussein delegated

Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid to convey his condolences to Saqf Al Heit family. Also His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan delegated Jordan Television Director Naser Judeh, and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali delegated Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi to represent them at the funeral.



The Editor and Staff of the Jordan Times mourn the untimely passing of

Mohammad Amin

Secretary General of the Ministry of Information, a man of principles and a professional who nobly served his country. The Jordan Times extends sincere condolences to his family.

Trust, not force, should be basis of Baltic security — Chernomyrdin

RIGA (AFP) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Friday security in the Baltic region should be based on mutual trust and cooperation, and not military force.

In an oblique criticism of the three Baltic states' desire to join NATO, Mr. Chernomyrdin said Russian President Boris Yeltsin had already made a series of proposals aimed at bolstering confidence.

On an official visit to Stockholm last month Mr. Yeltsin announced a unilateral 40 per cent reduction of troop and naval forces in northwestern Russia — a move aimed at dissuading Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from seeking NATO membership.

"The proposals of President Yeltsin are another proof of the importance that we attach to security in the Baltic region," Mr. Chernomyrdin told leaders attending the Council of Baltic Sea States heads of government summit here.

"The basis of security in the Baltic region (should not be) military potential but strong measures of trust and practical cooperation," he said in a written text, a copy of which was obtained by AFP.

Late last year Mr. Yeltsin also offered security guarantees for Russia's little

neighbours as part of a campaign to block their NATO ambitions.

The offer was politely but firmly turned down, and last week the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania travelled to Washington to sign a landmark cooperation agreement with the United States.

Although non-binding and shorn of security guarantees in a bid to mollify Moscow, U.S. President Bill Clinton said the charter "furthered America's commitment to help Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to deepen their integration and prepare for membership in the European Union and NATO."

Russia is bitterly opposed to the Baltic republics' integration into the Western alliance, which it says is a relic of the cold war era and risks creating a new "Berlin wall" across Europe.

Mr. Chernomyrdin also reiterated Russian objections to anti-dumping measures imposed by the European Union on Russian goods, which Moscow says is hurting its trade, and urged the EU to recognise Russia as a market economy.

The market economy appellation would help Russia to boost its exports to Western markets and gain entry to the World Trade Organisation, which governs international tariffs and trade disputes between member states. "It is important in the context of the forthcoming enlargement of the EU that the trade interest of Russia and the other members of the CIS is taken into account," the premier added, referring to the Commonwealth of Independent States, a loose grouping of 12 former Soviet Union states.

The 15-member EU should also ensure that the introduction of the European single currency, the euro, does not harm economic relations with its trading partners, Mr. Chernomyrdin added.

Russia, Germany discuss plans for summit

RIGA (AFP) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his Russian counterpart Viktor Chernomyrdin met for an hour late Thursday to discuss the first formal Russo-German summit, scheduled for later this year, German sources said.

The two leaders met after a formal banquet as heads of government of the Council of Baltic Sea States began a two-day meeting in the Latvian capital.

The talks "touched upon the agenda of the first summit meeting between the German and Russian governments," an official in the German delegation said.

The summit is due to take place in Germany some time in the first part of the year, officials said.

Although President Boris Yeltsin has held numerous informal summits with Mr. Kohl, whom he describes as "my friend Helmut," the two countries have not yet launched formal summits at heads-of-government level.

Mr. Kohl and Mr. Chernomyrdin also discussed a range of bilateral and international issues, the official added, without elaborating.

The presence of the two influential leaders has provided a fillip for the 11-member Council of Baltic Sea States, and marks the first time either man has visited Latvia since it regained independence from the former Soviet Union.

The CBSS groups Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission.

Former Communist states discuss EU hopes

LEVOCA, Slovakia (AFP) — Presidents from the former Communist bloc opened a two-day summit in this small Slovakian town Friday with their hopes for joining the European Union set to top the agenda.

In the shadow of the snow-capped high Tatras Mountains, eight leaders from Central and Eastern Europe met to discuss their prospects with three EU member counterparts, the presidents of Germany, Italy and Austria.

Amid tight security virtually cutting off the picturesque town from the outside world, the heads of state gathered to discuss "Civil Society — the Hope for a United Europe," the theme chosen by host President Michal Kovac.

"Already today, we can say that the summit is a step which brings European countries and nations closer together," said Mr. Kovac, who opened the summit with a formal dinner in a hotel on the town square.

Leaders of the 15-member European Union agreed in Luxembourg in December to begin membership talks this year with six countries, including four represented in Levoča: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

The presence of Austria's President Thomas Klestil, Italy's Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Germany's Roman Herzog is seen here as a sign of regional solidarity with

the EU aspirants.

"The meeting in Levoča will be the first opportunity of evaluating the (Luxembourg) decision on European Union expansion," said Mr. Klestil, whose country takes over the EU presidency in July, earlier this week.

"I am looking forward to the summit because of the presentation of Central Europe presidents' opinions on such decisions and EU countries' reactions to them," he told the Slovak national news agency.

The Levoča summit, the fifth such annual meeting, brings together Austria's Klestil, Bulgaria's Petar Stoyanov, newly-elected Czech President Vaclav Havel, Germany's Roman Herzog, Arpad Goncz of Hungary, Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Polish leader Alexander Kwasniewski, Emil Constantinescu of Romania, Slovak host Kovac, Milan Kucan of Slovakia, and Ukrainian head of state Leonid Kuchma.

The European Union's enlargement process is to be launched in March, with formal negotiations with the first six countries to begin on April 1.

The unitary framework for the start of the enlargement negotiations was established by Luxembourg to bridge the gap between those countries that favour early differentiation and those that fear this could discourage countries in

the second group from vigorously pursuing the reforms.

Ironically, host Slovakia is among five countries blocked from starting membership talks immediately — although they may be given a guarantee that they can move onto the fast-track if they make sufficient progress in economic and political reform.

Among the five, the main problems relate to their slow progress in adapting from command to market economies. In the case of Slovakia there are also serious concerns about its restrictions on democracy and the press.

President Kovac welcomed the choice of Slovakia as venue for the meeting. "People should realise that the presidents, through their participation, clearly declare that Slovakia belongs in Europe. They want Slovakia to be a part of the EU and European structures," he told the Slovak news agency Thursday.

The Levoča meeting is the fifth such annual summit. The meeting was held in the Czech Republic in 1994, Hungary in 1995, Poland in 1996 and Slovenia last year.

When not summitting, the assembled heads of state will be able to enjoy the delights of this small medieval town, with highlights including one of the world's tallest Gothic altars in the local Saint James' Church.

Chinese dissident arrested

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese dissident Zhao Changqing, who was under house arrest for 10 days, has been formally arrested, an associate told AFP Friday.

Police in Hanzhong city in the northern province of Shaanxi took Mr. Zhao, 28, to an unknown destination, said the associate. Qin Yongmin, adding his family has no information about him.

Mr. Zhao, a factory worker, had protested against a rule introduced by his employers seeking to prevent him from con-

testing elections to China's rubber-stamp parliament.

Mr. Zhao has already spent six months in prison after the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in 1989.

Chinese law allows anyone backed by 10 other voters to be a candidate. Mr. Zhao had gathered the signatures of 60 colleagues in his factory 813 of the Nuclear Industry General Co.

But the factory management decided that only Communist Party

members with a higher party standing than the factory's deputy director could run in the polls, mostly carried out within workplaces for committees which control daily life.

His associate, Mr. Qin, Thursday sent an open letter to National People's Congress Chairman Qiao Shi, calling for an end to Mr. Zhao's house arrest.

Mr. Qin, based in Wuhan, has himself refused a police order to leave the country this month.

India to tell Chirac of opposition to Mirage sale to Pakistan

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India will tell visiting French President Jacques Chirac of its opposition to the sale of French Mirage jets to arch-rival Pakistan, a senior official said here Friday.

The official said on condition of anonymity: "We will make this concern known. We've always done so."

Mr. Chirac arrives in India Saturday on a three-day trip. He will attend India's Republic Day celebrations Monday as guest of honour.

France-India relations soured in 1995 when Benazir Bhutto, prime minister of Pakistan at the time, announced Paris was ready to sell Mirage jets to Islamabad. The sale never took place but affected ties between India and France, which held no official contact for 18 months.

The official said the sale would not be "proper" but added that the "problem" over the issue had been resolved.

"I can say confidently that that's been cleared," he said. "We would like to develop a stable, and I underline stable, relationship."

He said India and France were discussing cooperation in defence matters and added that a French official held talks on the issue in New Delhi recently.

Asked about possible nuclear cooperation, the Indian official said New Delhi was keen to explore the matter. France, however, has stressed any agreement would have to respect international norms on nuclear non-proliferation.

India last year refused to sign a global test ban treaty, arguing it discriminated between the nuclear haves and have-nots and did not include a timebound framework for global disarmament.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 but says it has not built nuclear weapons.

India and Pakistan accuse each other of carrying out a covert nuclear programme. The two neighbours have fought three wars since their 1947 independence from British rule.



Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern (right), accompanied by Sinn Féin Chief negotiator Martin McGuinness, speaks after laying a wreath in tribute to those who died on 'Bloody Sunday' at the memorial in Londonderry. Ahern called again on British Prime Minister Tony Blair to order a new inquiry into the tragedy in which 14 civilians were shot dead by British paratroopers in January 1972 (Reuters photo)

London and Dublin struggle to keep peace process alive

LONDON (AFP) — London and Dublin were engaged in desperate efforts Friday to keep alive the rocky path to a settlement in Northern Ireland before extremists derail the peace process with their campaign of terror.

As more troops were deployed in Belfast from other parts of the province, the two governments resisted pressure to expel from the peace talks the political representatives of a Protestant militia accused of breaking its ceasefire.

The official said on condition of anonymity: "The only way forward is through engagement in the talks process. Those unwilling to recognise this will not deflect us from seeking to achieve a political settlement in Northern Ireland."

Protestant militia Secretary Mo Mowlam said. Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, speaking at a wreath-laying ceremony in Londonderry at the site of Bloody Sunday, where British troops shot dead 14 civilians in 1972, said he did not want the militia's political arm expelled.

"I do not want anybody out of the inter-party talks. I want an inclusive process to find the solution," he said. Monday, peace talks between Catholic republicans, who want a united Ireland, and Protestant unionists, who want to retain British rule, resume in London.

This will set the stage for an immediate crisis, with the centrist Alliance party planning to call for the exclusion of the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), allowed in the talks by dint of the UFF's ostensible ceasefire.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) was accused Thursday by police chief Ronnie Flanagan of taking part in the killing of three Catholics.

The UFF and other mainstream Protestant militias announced their cessation of hostilities in October 1994.

With doubts surrounding the future of the peace process, fear continued to grip the streets of Belfast, where another Catholic victim was badly injured Thursday night. His condition was described as "serious" Friday morning.

A wave of tit-for-tat sectarian attacks which have occurred since Christmas have claimed the lives of eight men — two Protestants and six Catholics.

For a party to be ejected from the negotiations, a formal complaint has to be lodged with talks chairman, former U.S. Senator George Mitchell. If he decides to endorse the request, London and Dublin must then approve the expulsion.

If the UDP was forced out, this would jeopardise the whole process by watering down the political representation of the Protestant community at large, and cast doubts about the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.

The opposition Conservatives have demanded action against the UDP for breaching the "Mitchell principles" of non-violence and democracy. But neither of the two main Protestant and Catholic parties in the province have backed this call.

And a member of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Alec Maskey, said his party wanted a totally inclusive process.

Eight political parties representing both Catholic and Protestant communities have been given a May deadline to reach a deal.

But Dublin and London are walking a tightrope between the two sides. Earlier this week, the IRA warned of a "crisis" in the peace talks, rejecting the latest Anglo-Irish blueprint for the negotiations as biased towards the Protestant community.

And the main Protestant party in the province, the Ulster Unionists, also warned they might pull out of the talks if changes were made to a key document to cement links with Ireland.

Monday, the two governments are expected to present for discussion new details of cross-border institutions and Dublin's role — which would create greater links with Ireland than envisaged under the original blueprint.

To add to the crisis, the IRA is under growing pressure from grassroots republicans to renege on its July 1997 ceasefire and join the hardline militia, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), in retaliating to the wave of attacks on Catholics.

The INLA's killing of extremist Protestant leader of the LVF Billy Wright in the top security Maze prison outside Belfast on January 27 sparked the latest round of violence.

More than 3,200 people have been killed during nearly 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland.

Politician 'fighting corruption' fails to declare election expenses

LONDON (AFP) — A former BBC war correspondent who turned politician at the last election to fight a Conservative MP accused of political corruption failed to declare almost 10,000 pounds (\$16,000) of election expenses contrary to British polling law, the Mirror newspaper said Friday.

Independent MP Martin Bell had a 9,400 pound (\$16,000) bill for legal advice secretly paid for him during the election campaign by Labour and the Liberal Democrats, the paper said.

The paper said Mr. Bell could now be prosecuted and fined up to 5,000 pounds (\$8,000) if found guilty of breaking polling laws, and his election could be declared void.

But Mr. Bell said he had no regrets about his conduct during the election.

"I actually have no apologies, because what they were doing was enabling me to stay in the race ... honestly, it doesn't bother me," he told BBC radio Friday.

He said that at the time of the poll, although he was getting legal advice via the parties which had stood their candidates down in his favour, he assumed it was being provided by the lawyer for free.

He discovered only two days ago that the advice was paid for.

And Mr. Bell insisted that in any case, legal advice did not count as an election expense.

"Traditionally, legal advice does not count as a campaign expense. I now discover that we took legal advice about whether it was, and it is not," he said.

A Labour party spokesman confirmed the money had been paid out but would not confirm the amount. A Liberal Democrat spokesman confirmed that Labour and the Liberal Democrats had "enabled Martin Bell to seek legal advice."

Labour and the Liberal Democrats stood down their candidates to let Bell challenge Tory former Minister Neil Hamilton in the Cheshire seat of Tatton. Mr. Bell won an overwhelming majority.

French exasperated by mobile phones

PARIS (R) — The French are fed up with mobile telephones disturbing them in public places and 57 per cent of them want a law passed to regulate use of the phones, an opinion poll showed Friday.

The survey published by Le Parisien newspaper cited the case of a university professor who recorded that a recent hour-long lecture he gave was interrupted 37 times by students' telephones.

One irate restaurant owner has taken to blowing a whistle when patrons ignore their food in favour of the phone, the newspaper said.

The poll, carried out by the CSA group among 1,005 people, showed the places where the French most wanted use of mobile phones regulated were: places of entertainment, restaurants, sports fields, public transport, private cars, on beaches, in business meetings and on café terraces.

Japanese man convicted for child sexual abuse in Manila

MANILA (AFP) — A Japanese man was sentenced Friday to a maximum 42 years in jail by a Philippine court for seven counts of child sexual abuse, court officials said.

Judge Milagros Garcia-Beza of a court in suburban Pasay City found Hisayoshi Maruyama, 45, of Tokyo, "guilty beyond reasonable doubt" of seven counts of acts of lasciviousness from 1990-1991 involving chil-

dren aged 10-11 years old.

Conviction in each of the seven counts carries a penalty of up to six years in jail for a total of 42 years.

The court heard testimony that Maruyama "feloniously and with lewd designs" performed sexual acts with six boys ranging in age from 10 to 11 on several occasions in April 1991.

He also took pictures of

adult male Filipinos having sex with an 11-year-old girl at a hotel in the capital in October 1990, the court heard.

Maruyama had denied the charges but the court said "the mere denials of the accused cannot overcome positive assertions and identification of the accused by the herein private complainants who were all minors below 12 years old at the time of the incident."

Politician
'fighting
corruption'
fails to
declare
election
expenses

LONDON (AFP) — A British politician who turned up at the last election with a Conservative MP's name on his political card failed to declare election expenses to British voters, the Mirror newspaper says.

Independent MP John Birt had a £10,000 bill for a holiday in the Channel Islands during the campaign to elect the Liberal Democrat MP for the constituency of Plymouth, the paper said.

The paper said Birt could not be reached for comment and that he had not declared the expenses.

But Mr Birt said he had not declared the expenses because he was not a Conservative MP.

He said he was a Liberal Democrat MP and that he had not declared the expenses because he was not a Conservative MP.

He said he was a Liberal Democrat MP and that he had not declared the expenses because he was not a Conservative MP.

French
exasperated
by mobile
phones

PARIS (AFP) — French people are growing exasperated by the use of mobile phones in public places, a survey by the French government says.

The survey, carried out by the French government, found that 60 per cent of people were annoyed by the use of mobile phones in public places.

The survey also found that 40 per cent of people were annoyed by the use of mobile phones in public places.

World News

Cambodian strongman rejects ceasefire talks with prince

TAKHMAU. Cambodia (AFP) — Cambodian strongman Hun Sen rejected Friday any suggestion he would negotiate a ceasefire with deposed co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh, throwing cold water on reports that the two men might meet for peace talks in Thailand.

"If I wished to meet him I would have met him long ago," the powerful second prime minister told reporters after a meeting with U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson at his country estate here just outside the capital.

King Norodom Sihanouk "already proposed informal meetings in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh (which I turned down). Why should I go to meet him now?" Hun Sen asked.

The dismissal came after the premier this week accepted an invitation from Thai Premier Chuan Leekpai to visit Bangkok where the exiled prince, whom he effectively ousted in force fighting in July, is now based.

While the visit is intended to focus on bilateral issues, some press reports have speculated the Thai government and the prince might use the opportunity to push a meeting between the two.

Hun Sen's comments also came as an additional 28 supporters of the prince, mainly family members of politicians, returned to Cambodia from exile in Thailand, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The premier, noting the growing number of returnees, questioned the need for any talks on a ceasefire while the situation was progressing positively.

"The talk-talk period is over," he said, accusing the prince's resistance of trying to turn to "legal aspects into political ones."

"I will meet the prince after he is tried by a court," he said, referring to legal proceedings on criminal counts with which the prince is charged.

"I will pay a visit if he is in prison," Hun Sen said.

The premier reiterated the conditions of his own proposal for a ceasefire in the factional fighting here which he said were non-negotiable and not worth discussing.

The conditions include the prince rescinding orders to his troops to fight, and revoke military appointments he made creating the resistance movement and cutting off all links with the outlawed Khmer Rouge.

In return, the premier has offered to let the resistance keep their weapons, remain in their areas of control and travel freely throughout other zones as long as they do not carry firearms and renounce violence as a means of achieving their goals.

But he has steadfastly dismissed the idea of discussing the proposals either directly with the prince or between representatives of himself and the prince.

Shortly after Hun Sen made the offer, Prince Ranariddh indicated his desire to discuss "specific modalities" relating to implementing it and named two representatives who could meet Phnom Penh officials in Thailand for the talks.

But Hun Sen remained adamant.

"Government officials and the armed forces will meet these people when the prince issues the orders to stop fighting," he said.

"The ceasefire will begin when the prince stops giving orders to pull the trigger."

Fighting between the two sides has been ongoing since July when Prince Ranariddh was ousted but is confined to the north and northwest parts of the country.



Indonesian activist Ratna Sarumpaet reads a statement during a protest outside the national parliament in Jakarta. About 100 protesters urged President Suharto to step down after Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad gave a revised budget speech (Reuters photo)

Opposition supporters call on Suharto to step down

JAKARTA (AFP) — Hundreds of protesters supporting Indonesia's two most outspoken opposition leaders demonstrated Friday morning in front of parliament to demand that President Suharto step down after 32 years.

"We, the Indonesian people who want a better life, are forced to voice our demand that Suharto step down at the end of his term in March," Ratna Sarumpaet read her statement outside the parliament building under the tight guard of about 75 military and police personnel.

About 300 supporters of Rais and Megawati, who have formed a loose alliance, held banners saying "Suharto elected, the dollar leaps," and "Rise in prices, whose fault is that?"

Critics blame Mr. Suharto for the sharp fall of the rupiah against the dollar and rising prices of rice and other essentials.

President Suharto, 76, the longest-running leader in Asia has accepted his party's nomination for president this week.

He has run unopposed in every election held under his new order regime since 1972, six years after he rose to power in the wake of a failed coup attempt against his predecessor Sukarno, the father of Megawati.

Sarumpaet said the current economic crisis was like an "illness without cure, because for 30 years of rule Suharto has based economic fundamentals on nepotism, monopoly and oligopoly... which has become the rot of his corrupt system."

Indonesia is currently embroiled in its worst economic crisis in 30 years following the fall of the rupiah against the dollar since mid-1997.

Russian deputies tell Yeltsin not to give islands to Japan

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian deputies of the far eastern region of Sakhalin have called on President Boris Yeltsin not to hand the Kuril Islands back in a peace deal with Japan.

Interfax news agency reported Friday.

The islands must not be used as bargaining counter to achieve the signature of a peace treaty with Japan, the local Sakhalin assembly said in a message to Mr. Yeltsin.

Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and his Japanese counterpart Keizo Obuchi to hammer out a peace treaty.

The two men are scheduled to meet in Moscow late next month.

Relations between the two countries have been hampered for over 50 years due to a dispute over the Kuril Islands lying north of Japan, which were occupied by Soviet forces in the last days of World War II.

Japan has refused to sign a peace treaty formally ending the war until the territories are returned. But at a landmark summit meeting in November, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Mr. Yeltsin agreed to work for conclusion of a bilateral peace treaty by 2000.

Clinton urged to come clean on relations with Lewinsky

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's careful denials of allegations that he coaxed a young intern to lie about their affair has left the major U.S. dailies wondering about his sincerity.

While Mr. Clinton's response to the scandal is appropriate for someone under criminal investigation "it is not sufficient for Mr. Clinton's other role as leader of the nation," said The New York Times Friday.

"Tell the Full Story, Mr. President," thunders the headline of the daily's editorial, which urges Mr. Clinton to make a televised evening speech before his State of the Union address to Congress Tuesday.

Mr. Clinton's apparent flip flop on his past relationship with Gennifer Flowers, wrote The Washington Post, "can only make people wonder whether Clinton has levelled with the public about this latest charge..."

During his 1992 campaign, Mr. Clinton denied having had a 12-year sexual relationship with Flowers, but in a deposition Saturday in the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit against him he admitted to the affair, sources told two Washington Post reporters.

"It is possible that the specific wording of remarks and the testimony may be, in some tortuous, legalistic sense, reconcilable," the editorial said, referring to White House spokesman Michael McCurry's comment Thursday that Mr. Clinton's 1992 denial and recent testimony were "not at odds."

But, the Post goes on to say: "It is worth keeping Mr. Clinton's public remarks concerning Gen-

Indian dream 'in tatters' after 50 years of freedom — Sonia Gandhi

JODHPUR, India (AFP) — The Italian-born widow of assassinated former Premier Rajiv Gandhi said Friday political instability had left the Indian dream "in tatters" after 50 years of independence.

Sonia Gandhi told an election rally of some 90,000 supporters in this western Indian city that only her husband's Congress party could provide stable government.

Ms. Gandhi, who has agreed to campaign for the once-dominant Congress but is not a candidate in the polls, said: "The dream that India had when it gained independence is in tatters."

"We have to have better employment opportunities, education and social justice," she said.

India goes to the polls in February and March following the collapse of a minority coalition government.

It will elect its fifth government within two years.

The 51-year-old widow, speaking in Hindi, said: "We need a stable government which only the Congress can provide because this is the only national party which reflects the principles of all Indians and stands for religious unity."

She recalled the role of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty, which gave India three prime ministers and ruled the country virtually unchallenged for the first four decades after independence in 1947.

"I am a daughter-in-law of a proud family. I know how to take the nation to a path of growth," she said to rousing applause.

Sonia Gandhi's husband Rajiv, his mother Indira Gandhi and her father Jawaharlal Nehru were all former prime ministers.

In recent years, however, the emergence of community and regional parties has led to a series of weak coalitions.

Analysts say the current polls will also end in a hung parliament, with the right-wing Hindu nationalists emerging as the country's largest party ahead of the Congress.

The Congress accuses the nationalists of being sectarian and of threatening India's secular constitution.

The venue, an open air stadium in Jodhpur, was filled with men in colorful turbans and veiled women. Police ringed the tightly-guarded area and the crowds were frisked before being allowed inside.

The crowd welcomed Sonia Gandhi with cries of "Long Live Sonia Gandhi" and "May Rajiv Gandhi be immortal." Sadhna, an eight-year-old girl, said: "I had not seen Sonia before. She is a great woman for me. I walked three kilometers to see her."

Umaro Behn, a Congress worker in her eighties, said Sonia Gandhi "has come to save Congress. She is like a god to us."

Rajiv Gandhi, killed by a woman suicide bomber during an election tour on May 21, 1991, had addressed a meeting in Jodhpur five days before his death.

A tape of the speech was played Friday, in which he said: "Only Congress can give stability. My dream is to see India surging ahead in the world. There is lot of unfinished work."

Sonia Gandhi later Friday spoke to a second rally in Nadurbar, a town in the western state of Maharashtra, where she repeated she was not seeking a "political position" following the polls.

She said she was campaigning out of "the same devotion and love towards the country which led Indira Gandhi and Rajiv to sacrifice their lives."

Attacked by the nationalists for being a foreigner despite living in India since 1968 and taking on Indian citizenship, she has travelled extensively since launching her campaign earlier this month at her husband's assassination site.

Kenyan opposition leader files suit to annul Moi's election

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenyan opposition leader Mwai Kibaki of the Democratic Party (DP) has filed a court petition seeking to nullify December's reelection of President Daniel Arap Moi.

In the suit, filed at the high court Thursday by leading opposition constitutional lawyer Phiroze Nowrojee, Mr. Kibaki cites 75 grounds and wants a scrutiny of the votes cast in the presidential elections and the rejected, void and spoilt ballot papers, the reports said.

Mr. Kibaki also seeks a recount of all the ballot papers cast in the election and a declaration that Mr. Moi was not validly elected.

The suit said that Mr. Moi was prematurely elected and that the presidential election was not conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and all other applicable laws, including the Electoral Offences Act.

"The chairman of the Electoral Commission (EC), the EC and its officers, without authority and in breach of the Constitution and other applicable laws, wrongfully extended the voting in the election by another day," the suit said.

It also accused the EC of causing or allowing or failing to prevent the printing of two identical sets of ballot papers, one of which was illegal and contributed to the corruption of the elections.

President Moi, who was sworn in for his last five-year term on Jan. 5, is the first respondent in the suit, while EC Chairman Samuel Kivuiti and the EC are the second and third respondents, respectively.

Mr. Kibaki's suit, which comes only 12 days before the new parliament was due to sit to elect its house speakers and committees, follows his vow on Jan. 7 that due to massive rigging in the presidential and parliamentary polls, he would fight in parliament and the courts to overturn the results.

Thursday, the national assembly clerk, F. Mwasya, announced that all party nominees for the non-elected parliamentary seats had been accepted and finalised.

This paved the way for the eighth parliament to start its first session on Feb. 3 to elect the speaker and his deputy, as well as chairmen of the various House committees.

Kuala Lumpur alarmed by haze scare

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Residents in areas surrounding Kuala Lumpur were alarmed when they woke up Friday to find a thick veil of smoke shrouding the normally clear blue sky.

Visibility dropped significantly, forcing some motorists to switch on their lights as the blinding haze kept buildings such as the world's tallest Petronas Twin Towers out of sight.

But strong sunlight piercing through the layer of grey at midday helped ease the situation, although the haze was top of the agenda for morning radio programmes.

An official from the environment department quashed fears, saying the haze was due to "smoke from open burning of a rubbish dump" in the Ulu Langat district, off the city centre.

He said the department had been deluged with phone calls from concerned citizens since morning but was unable to provide any information at the moment as "our officer is there assessing the situation now."

About noon, the air pollutant index rose to 100 from 54 late Thursday but the official said the concentration of pollutants was different. A reading of between 0 and 50 is good, 51 to 100 is moderate and 101-200 is unhealthy.

Central Selangor state executive councillor for local governments, urbanisation and squatter development Fuad Hassan said the "fire, aggravated by 'minor explosions,' was believed to have started early Thursday."

About 60 per cent of the 15-hectare dumpsite in Hulu Langat was razed, spawning thick billowing smoke which spread to surrounding areas, Mr. Fuad was quoted by Bernama news agency as saying.

He attributed the fire to the current hot weather to the fire, which reached as high as 213 metres and expected the blaze to continue over the next few days, Bernama said.

Mr. Fuad said the Royal Malaysian Air Force may be asked to help douse the fire through aerial-spraying while the operational committee was now considering conducting a controlled explosion of the area. He assured, however, that smoke from the fire were contained.

Bernama said the dumpsite was closed three months ago due to a high volume of rubbish.

A meteorological department forecaster said "there is nothing to worry about because this season is not favourable for the haze."

"Once the burning stops, the wind will blow the smoke away," he added.

Malaysia and several parts of the region were engulfed by thick smog due to forest fires in Indonesia for more than three months from August.

At its worst, a state of emergency was declared in the eastern state of Sarawak on Borneo Island when the air pollutant index breached hazardous levels to hit over 800. But the haze has since cleared after the country's year-end monsoon season.

Black S. African government 'awakening the tiger' — Botha

GEORGE, South Africa (AFP) — P.W. Botha, the South African former president who rigidly marshalled apartheid in its worst years, appeared in court Friday for refusing to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As expected, the hearing in this Western Cape town was immediately adjourned by chief magistrate Victor Lugajau to Feb. 23, when Pieter Botha will be asked to plead Mr. Lugajau set April 14 as the date for a trial proper.

In a statement read out to the media after the 21-minute hearing, Mr. Botha warned that the African National Congress government was "awakening the tiger in the Afrikaner," referring to the Boer community of Dutch descent.

Speaking in Afrikaans, Mr. Botha said: "I believe South Africa is on a very dangerous road" under the mainly black government which ousted Mr. Botha's white National Party from power in the first free, all-race elections in 1994.

He accused the truth commission, set up to investigate political crimes during the apartheid era, of stoking racism.

"When it comes to stoking racism the TRC is the biggest culprit," declared the 82-year-old former apartheid strongman, who headed the white minority regime for 11 years from 1978-1989, and only belatedly introduced minor reforms.

The TRC has been investigating political crimes committed by all sides in the years of enforced racial segregation and the black liberation struggle, and has been empowered to grant amnesties in some cases, but Mr. Botha has already dismissed it as a "circus" while his backers accuse it of bias.

"I'm worried that we are heading for disaster. Effective government administration is grinding to a halt. Pensions of the poor and the old are not being paid. Our farmers are being murdered almost on a daily basis," Mr. Botha said.

"Civilised people of all groupings are becoming the victims of violent hijacks, rapes and robberies. Allegations of corruption and nepotism are rife... and then all of this is being blamed on so-called apartheid."

"Reasonable people in our country are no longer prepared to accept this empty excuse," he added.

He stated he had nothing to apologise for.

"I only apologise for my sins before God. Why should I apologise before Bishop Tutu," Mr. Botha said, using an incorrect title for Desmond Tutu, former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, chairman of the truth body.

Earlier, as he limped into the courtroom, Mr. Botha dressed in a dark suit and white shirt and accompanied by his fiancée, turned to his supporters sitting in the gallery and saluted them.

They in turn waved in greeting. Among them were three former heads of the military who served under Mr. Botha: Constant Viljoen, former Defence Minister Magnus Malan, and Jannie Geldenhuys.

Mr. Botha, a widower who had a hip replaced last year, plans to marry Reinette le Water Naude, 35 years his junior. The hearing was adjourned to February to give Mr. Lugajau time to digest the pile of documents generated by the case. Mr. Botha's supporters have stated that he has already given a massive wad of written testimony to the TRC.

Mr. Botha was in court for ignoring subpoenas to appear before the truth commission, which wants to question him on his chairmanship of the now-defunct State Security Council, the secretive state mechanism which brutally enforced apartheid.

Mr. Botha was typically defiant about his role: "I stand with all those who executed lawful commands from my government in our struggle against the revolutionary communist onslaught against our country."

Several top police officers are currently serving life sentences for murdering anti-apartheid activists.

Jordan Times

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Force to reflect

THE SEPARATE talks that U.S. President Bill Clinton held with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat last week were inconclusive. The fact that the talks were overshadowed by allegations about President Clinton's private life does not account for that result. What does have more to do with a decision by the White House to turn the encounters into a forum for each side to plead its own case about the failure of the other to meet its obligations under the Oslo accords. The U.S. president did not rule in favour of one party or another and left the impression that the jury is still out on the Palestinian-Israeli stand-off.

The only visible outcome of the Washington's efforts to bridge the gap between the two sides is ostensibly an understanding to give them extra time to work out their differences. On this basis what might have been an opportunity to achieve a breakthrough in the stalled peace process has slipped. Not that we expected it to be otherwise. But when Netanyahu is given a hero's welcome upon his return home, we have to conclude that his people are viewing the outcome of the two meetings he held with the president as a resounding success since at the least the U.S. did not exercise pressure on them.

For the Palestinians, the story is certainly different. They obviously failed to get what they wanted from the Americans.

Where do the parties go from here is anybody's guess. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has suggested that more meetings will be held between her and the Israelis and Palestinians in the coming two weeks to work out a framework for new progress. In other words, Washington thinks it is giving peace another lease on life no matter how short it may turn out to be. But as Arafat returns home effectively empty-handed, all sorts of scenarios are possible including an outbreak of violence. This might happen despite the fact that the most recent setback on the Palestinian track is nothing new. Netanyahu was elected on a platform to rewrite the Oslo accords and, notwithstanding all rhetoric to the contrary, he has been busy going even beyond. The prime minister probably thinks that the Clinton administration cannot put too much pressure on him, not only because congressional elections loom in the horizon but also because it seeks to assure the election of Vice President Al Gore as the next U.S. president. Over and above these domestic concerns, President Clinton is already besieged by his own personal problems, which could get out of hand, at least in as far as shaping and pursuing foreign policy goals.

For Israel, the bottom line is its insistence on keeping about 60 per cent of the West Bank. With only 40 per cent of their territories returned to them, the Palestinians cannot establish their own independent state. The Palestinians cannot on their own change this Israeli stance. External pressure effective on Israel has to come from somewhere. Should it be forthcoming from neither the Americans nor the Europeans, Arafat would have to turn to the Arab World for solace and stronger support.

The Arabs in this case would have one of two options to adopt: Abandon the Palestinians in favour, or as a result of, their weaknesses, divisions and inaction; or rise up to the challenge and close ranks around the need to stand up for their common cause.

If the latter course of action is preferred, the Arab World had better start preparations for another summit in which the minimum required would be to think about how the challenge might be met.

This is not the time for anyone to gloat over the impending death of the Oslo accords. It is time to save the region as a whole from permanent instability and perpetual conflict.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RAY'S Mahmoud Rintawi welcomed a decision by the Iraqi government to release Jordanian prisoners in Iraqi jails saying the release came in response to appeals on the part of the Jordanian government and organisations and the relatives of the prisoners. The writer said regardless of the way in which arrangements were made for the release of these prisoners, their coming back to their homeland is a source of joy to the whole Jordanian family. Expressing hope that the release of the prisoners will further strengthen Jordanian-Iraqi ties, the writer said, it is hoped that the Iraqi government will follow this step by another in securing the release of all the Jordanians who might still be in Iraqi jails. One has to view the release of the prisoners from a positive perspective regardless of the political objectives that might have motivated the move, he continued. The writer said the release of the Jordanians from Iraqi jails has been a persistent demand on the part of the Jordanian government following the execution of the four Jordanian citizens accused of smuggling auto spare parts. He added that the release is a favourable response to the government's endeavours.

AL RAY'S Munes Razzaz said a nation which does not take into consideration a military action against its enemy to regain its usurped lands, it can never achieve a just peace with that enemy. A vanquished nation cannot make any demands on its strong enemy unless through war or struggle in other means, he added. Whatever agreement that might be concluded between the victor and the vanquished it can only be called capitulation and not peace, and hence we cannot harbour any hope to attain "the peace of the brave" with Israel unless the Jewish state starts to feel that its occupation of Arab land has become a costly burden. Razzaz said. He said this is clear in the case of Lebanon whose southern regions have been occupied by Israel which has lately been declaring its desire to pull out its troops in view of the huge losses inflicted on them by the resistance groups. The writer said the military option should not necessarily mean conventional war among armies, adding that violent confrontation has different forms but what is important is to muster the will for that option.

The Asian Crisis: Part Two

Pendulums and orthodoxy

This is the second of a three-part special series in which Gwynne Dyer examines the economic, social, and political implications of the crisis that began in Asia and now threatens to involve the entire world.

KUALA LUMPUR — One major difference between my personal economy and that of South Korea is that if a foreign bank should agree to lend me a few hundred million dollars so that I can produce this column from my own 60-story office tower, rather than banging it out on airline meal trays and the kitchen table, the bankers will want a close look at tedious details like my collateral, cash flow, etc. Whereas with South Korea, until recently, it was Christmas every day.

Another difference is that if I should go belly-up, the only help I will get is directions to the nearest bankruptcy court. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will not step in to save me and the bank from our joint folly. Whereas when South Korea faces bankruptcy, the IMF makes \$57 billion available on short notice to get both the Koreans and their creditors off the hook.

Never mind the injustice of this. (I'm used to it.) Consider instead what it may portend for the reigning economic orthodoxy of the global market.

In 1936 John Maynard Keynes wrote: "The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."

For the first generation after the World War II, the most influential defunct economist was Keynes himself, and the world economy has never grown faster than it did in 1950-1970. But human nature can subvert any economic doctrine ever invented, and by the late 1970s 'Keynesian economics' was about as fashionable as acne.

Keynes' goal, writing in the middle of the Great Depression, was to save capitalism from destruction by its own excesses, and the disaster of mass unemployment persuaded a generation of Western leaders to adopt his prescription for smoothing out the economic cycle. Or rather, they bought half of it: the bit about running deficit budgets during a downturn to boost employment. But somehow they could never manage to run surplus budgets during the upswing, so eventually soaring inflation discredited the whole notion.

Enter Milton Friedman and his neo-laissez-faire doctrines: government intervention is bad for you. The Market Knows Best, the 'hidden hand' will take care of the future. It's recycled Adam Smith, really, but there weren't many other options: there are only a few Big Ideas in economics.

For two decades Friedman and the 'Chicago School' have had things all their own way, but human beings will always conspire to beat the system — and now we live in a global market.

How big a change is this, really? There was already a global market in goods in the 19th century, after all, and by the start of this century it included both trans-national companies and large foreign investment flows. But it wasn't much like our world: there was no real-time global financial market, for one thing.

For another, there was no menu of competing economic theories to choose from. Even in the political domain, the relatively few democratic countries were only gradually settling into the routine of alternating left-wing and right-wing parties, each picking up the pieces after the other has made a hash of things, that we now see as the natural order in domestic politics.

Then, between 1917 (the Bolshevik Revolution) and 1960 (the effective end of the decolonisation process), the 'first global market', which once incorporated almost 100 per cent of the world's people, fell to a mere 40 per cent. Everybody else was locked up in various fascist, communist, and authoritarian 'socialist' states — and it's only since the late 70s that we started climbing back to the current 95 per cent.

This 'second global market', thanks to instant communications, is a faster-moving, more sophisticated beast. It wouldn't be surprising if it began to show the same alternation between the poles of economic theory, the same pendulum swing between left- and right-wing ideas, that already characterises domestic politics in most societies.

Perhaps we have already seen such a pattern in the shift to Keynesian ('left') doctrines in the third quarter of this century, and then to Friedmanite ('right') doctrines in the last quarter. Two lurches in opposite directions do not necessarily add up to perpetual oscillation — but if ideas start to shift back to more intervention in the present crisis, then there is a real case to answer.

The huge bail-outs now being organised in Asia are a betrayal of Friedmanite orthodoxy, and the great man is livid. "It's utterly immoral to have unelected, unaccountable officials spending taxpayers' money helping out other countries with their bad debts," said Milton Friedman last week. And it's all the IMF's fault: the rot set in with its 1995 bail-out of Mexico. After that, Friedman alleges, "investors said to themselves: 'Why not take the risks' — they knew they would be bailed out if anything went wrong."

One can only wonder at the political naivete of a man who thinks the United States should have let its big next-door neighbour collapse into chaos in 1995, but these arguments are irrelevant now. The problem of the moment is that if any of the bigger Asian countries defaults on its foreign debt, the resulting chaos might well force the others into default as well. Then we're looking at \$400 billion in bad loans and an imploding world economy.

So the IMF is committing a necessary heresy — but as far as possible, it is still playing a very orthodox game. For example, the IMF used the negotiations with Seoul to push a banting ram through the door of the highly protectionist South Korean economy. Since 30 December, 1997 foreigners are allowed to purchase up to 55 per cent of any listed company in South Korea. By the end of this year, they will be able to buy them outright.

Credit Lyonnais Securities recently estimated that only 87 of South Korea's 653 listed non-financial companies are safe from foreign predators. With the won worth less than half what it was three months ago, a lot of the South Korean economy is going to be snapped up by foreigners, and there is bound to be a nationalist backlash.

Seoul already came close to default once in the frantic December negotiations with the IMF, and the pressures will mount rapidly on president-elect Kim Dae-jung. But the incoming government has done one clever thing: it has taken George Soros as Kim's 'unofficial adviser'.

Soros, the Hungarian-born financier who built a \$12 billion fortune on currency speculation, is not a popular man in Asia, and he is particularly unpopular with Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. "All these (Asian) countries have spent 40 years trying to build up their economies, and a moron like Soros comes along with a lot of money to speculate, and ruins things," Mahathir complained last July.

"(Dr. Mahathir) is a menace to his country," replied Soros, blaming the Malaysian prime minister's mouth-mouth rhetoric for highlighting Malaysia's relatively modest economic problems when a lower profile might have let it escape as lightly as, say, Taiwan. It grew into

a world-class slanging match, casting the two men as archetypes of corrupt 'Asian way' crony capitalism and doctrinaire Western free-market triumphalism. (One suspects that neither of them gets contradicted very often at home.) But their ideas are not really that far apart.

In only two decades, Mahathir Mohamad has transformed multi-ethnic Malaysia from an impoverished backwater of Singapore into one of the most impressive 'tiger' societies. He did it using all the standard 'Asian' methods: special concessions to political cronies to start up new enterprises; cheap loans from a compliant banking system; protection against foreign competition in the home market. And it worked: Kuala Lumpur has not only the world's tallest building, but also decent low-cost housing for poor people.

Then Mahathir got blind-sided by the change in the global rules. The cozy 'Asian way' capitalism that served the 'tigers' so well in the first phase of industrialisation (as it served Japan too, a century before) suddenly ran out of rope. The flood of money from outside exacerbated all its worst tendencies to over-investment and non-accountability — and then exposed it to a scrutiny it could not survive. Crash.

Mahathir was wrong to blame Soros for the crash, and his demands for tighter controls on currency speculators have attracted unwelcome attention to Malaysia's own economy. But basically he's right: this should never have been allowed to happen.

George Soros doesn't believe it should have happened either, though he would argue that speculators are just the ultimate enforcers of financial discipline when all other controls have failed. The problem, as he sees it, is that there are no controls on international lending.

That's why he is proposing the creation of an International Credit Insurance Corporation as a sister institution to the IMF. It would guarantee international loans for a small fee, and borrowing countries would have to give it information on all foreign loans. The point is to keep a running tally on how deeply any country is getting into debt (which currently, believe it or not, is impossible not only for the lenders, but for most borrower governments too).

The International Credit Insurance Corporation would set a limit for each country on how much it was willing to guarantee, based on total loans outstanding and the state of the local economy — and beyond that limit, lenders would be on their own. "This would render any excessive credit expansion unlikely," Soros explains dryly. If investors cannot be trusted to act with enough prudence to prevent huge booms, panics, and collapses, self-restraint must be supplied by regulation. Just like in the domestic markets.

Trends are hard to identify at the start, but unless the law of gravity has been repealed, pendulums still swing. For two decades, right-wing economics has held sway in most of the world, with just the results you would expect: low inflation, high unemployment, moderate economic growth, and rapidly widening income differentials. This crisis could start a swing back in the other direction.

Globalisation is inevitable. Globalisation according to the rules written by the 'Chicago School' of economists is not the only way, or even the likeliest. As Yilmaz Akyuz, chief macro-economist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), said in this year's report: "A return to full employment policies is necessary to prevent a popular backlash against globalisation."

Akyuz is implicitly assuming that the 'popular backlash' will matter because decisions will be taken democratically, but that is precisely the question in Asia now. The old system is collapsing, but which way will Asians jump?

Writers cite economic motives for Al Rabia murders, see strengthening ties with Iraq following prisoners release

REVIEWED BY
 ELIA NASRALLAH

COLUMNISTS LAST week targeted their comments on the murders on an Iraqi diplomat and businessman in Amman, the release of the Jordanian prisoners in Iraq, U.S. efforts towards a lasting peace in the Middle East, regional issues and domestic affairs.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab described the murder of Iraqi and Egyptian nationals at Al Rabia district as a terrorist attack directed against the Jordanian economy and investors in Jordan. The barbaric attack on the Iraqi investors who have been living and working in Jordan is designed to scare off investors from the Kingdom and force them to seek investment opportunities elsewhere. Initial indications are that the crime was carefully planned and executed and intended to intimidate all Iraqi investors into leaving the Kingdom, charged the writer. He said the Jordanian government is called on to reveal all the facts surrounding the crime and expose those who perpetrated it as soon as possible since this is a serious matter of national security.

Abu Yazan, a writer for Al Dustour, said the Iraqi government is justified in expressing concern about the repeated attacks on its diplomats in Jordan. Jordan shares with the Iraqis their concern also because the Kingdom refuses to serve as an arena for different Iraqi groups to settle their scores in Jordan, said the writer. Foreign diplomats living in the Kingdom are expressing their surprise and shock over hearing about repeated attacks on fore-

ign, especially diplomats, in a country which has until late served as an oasis of stability and security in this turbulent region, the writer said. The past year of 1997 witnessed attacks on Hamas leaders, Israeli embassy officials and Iraqi diplomats, recalled the writer. While the attack on the Hamas leader came about as part of Israel's state-organised terrorist plans, he said, the attack on the Iraqis was designed to ruin the Kingdom's economy.

Another Al Dustour writer, Oreib Rintawi, said the fact that the Iraqi regime chose to release the Jordanian prisoners through a leading member of the Kingdom's opposition and not through proper diplomatic channels indicates that Baghdad meant to exert pressure on Jordan for some unknown reason. The release of the detainees from Iraqi jails is something which brings happiness to the Jordanian people, but the manner in which the release took place does not augur well for Jordanian-Iraqi relations because Baghdad released the prisoners not in response to repeated government appeals but rather through a leading opposition member, the writer said. The Iraqi regime should realise, said Rintawi, that Jordan has always followed a moderate policy and never interfered in the internal affairs of another country and therefore it would expect that Iraq avoid interfering in its affairs.

For Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm, Iraq's release of the Jordanian prisoners was a step in the right direction and aimed at bolstering Jordanian-Iraqi relations. By releasing the prisoners Baghdad sought to thwart certain groups' designs of straining existing bilateral relations which the

leaderships in the two countries are keen to protect and safeguard, said the writer. The Iraqis took the decision obviously in response to the Jordanian leadership's repeated requests and also in view of the Jordanian people's support of the Iraqi people in the face of the sanctions and foreign aggression, according to the writer. He said that while welcoming Iraq's good gesture towards Jordan, the Jordanian people hope to see a similar gesture coming from Damascus and serious efforts on the part of the Jordanian government to secure the release of Jordanians in Syrian jails.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Mahmoud Rimawi of Al Ra'i said the Arabs do not want to see Washington's role in the Middle East problem relegated to that of an observer because that would give Israel a free hand to ruin the peace process. The U.S. has pledged to play the role of active partner and guarantor of the peace process as witnessed by the world community and therefore it is expected to help the Palestinians and the Israelis reach an agreement, said the writer. Not only the

Arab World but also Europe, China and Russia have all expressed dismay over Washington's behaviour so far and its impotence vis-a-vis Israel's arrogance and disregard for U.N. resolutions and the peace accords. Rimawi said. He said the whole world expects the U.S. to shoulder its responsibility towards peace and to honour its commitment and pledge to play the role of active partner in the peace process.

Another Al Ra'i columnist, Ibrahim Absi, said the success or failure of the Washington meetings lies in the hands of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is Netanyahu who caused the disruption of the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations and it is his government's policies of building settlements and delaying the implementation of the peace accords that brought the whole peace process to a standstill, said the writer. If Washington remains indifferent to Netanyahu's actions and policies only a miracle can change the status quo, Absi said. The Washington parley provided the American administration with a golden opportunity to convince the Israelis of the need for peace by returning to the Palestinians their legitimate rights and lands, said the writer, who added that it is not yet too late for the miracle to happen and for the Americans to assume a tough stand to salvage the peace process.

Washington's persistence in exerting all forms of intimidation against Iraq is clearly designed to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein, said Daoud Qarneh of Al Arab Al Yawm. For seven years the Americans tried in vain to

bring down the government of Iraq by launching a devastating war on the Arab country, starving its people and forcing Arab states in the region to succumb to its will in maintaining their hostility towards Baghdad, Qarneh said. He said the "barbaric" action committed by the U.S. against the women and children of Iraq exposes Washington's real nature and its lust for hegemony over other nations. Furthermore the U.S. behaviour reflects the Americans' desire to teach other nations a lesson, that they too can be subjected to aggression should they decide to rebel against Washington's whims and desires, the writer charged. He said that by exercising all forms of terrorism against Iraq, Washington seeks to delete from the American people's minds the stigma of shame resulting from the U.S. ignominious defeat in Vietnam.

Al Aswaq's Rashid Hassan wrote in support of the proposal of 43 deputies that the salaries of the public servants be increased. The deputies request, submitted to the government, is justified in light of the soaring prices of every commodity, he said. It is regrettable to see the government impassive towards such a request although it is convinced that soaring prices have made people miserable at a time when economic conditions are deteriorating. The writer said the continued trend in price hikes is enlarging the margin of absolute and abject poverty in the Kingdom. Since the government has given the merchants a free hand to raise prices and since the public cannot halt the merchants' greed, said the writer, the government should at least raise its employees salaries.

Tracking contemporary Islamic movements: BOOK REVIEW

An empirical study

Islam in revolution. Fundamentalism in the Arab World, by R. Hrair Dekmejian. Syracuse University Press, 1995. 308 pages.

PROFESSOR HRAIR Dekmejian, who teaches political science at the University of Southern California, has taken on the enormous challenge of describing and analysing the contemporary Islamic movements in the Arab World via an empirical framework — something like trying to appreciate poetry by using a computer spell checker. He achieves his task with an impressive combination of breadth, depth and specificity, and with only a few weak points that are easily remedied in future editions of the book.

I very strongly recommend this book to scholars, officials, journalists and others who have a serious interest in Islamic politics and the Arab World, but lack detailed knowledge of the Islamist phenomenon's contemporary realities or historical roots. The book is neatly divided into three sections. Part one reviews "catalysts, indices and responses," part two examines case studies in six parts of the Arab World, and part three assesses the "new frontiers of Islamism" and its likely fate in the Arab region as a whole. Deftly and efficiently, Dekmejian skips over the rather peripheral debate about what one should call the phenomenon of Islamist politics by giving a complete rundown of all the different names, in Arabic and English, that could be used and are used. The rich variety of names (fundamentalism, Islamism, political Islam, Islamic activism, Islamic revival, and many others) merely emphasises that the words one uses to describe the political/religious phenomenon involved are far less important than adequately grasping the nature of the phenomenon itself.

In part one the author quickly and elegantly makes two vital points that many non-Arabs tend to miss when surveying our region: a) Islamism has been a recurring, cyclical, and almost organically pavlovian reaction to repeated crises in the Arab region since the birth of Islam in the 7th century AD, regularly triggering a revivalist response to every phase of decline; and, b) the contemporary setting for Arab Islamism comprises a series of serious crises that include "crises of identity, culture, state legitimacy, elite misuse and coercion, military impotence, and

class conflict."

It would have been surprising had religion not been summoned by the Arab people to address their multiple dilemmas. The present crisis is different from previous ones, though, the author notes, because of three attributes: its pervasiveness, throughout most of the Arab/Islamic World; its comprehensiveness, across social, economic, political, cultural, psychological and spiritual domains; and, its cumulativeness, reflecting "the culmination of unsuccessful efforts in nation-building, socio-economic development and military prowess."

He also points out the polycentric nature of Islamism, with many different variations of Islamism spontaneously sprouting in different forms in different lands for often different reasons.

In response, something of an archetypal "personality structure of the fundamentalist individual" has developed, and the author offers a daring attempt to identify the "modal personality" of the radical fundamentalist based on eleven recurring personality traits, e.g., alienation, activism-aggressiveness, conspiratorial outlook, idealism and austerity-hardiness (very reminiscent of Eric Hoffer's outline of the True Believer in the West some three decades ago!).

Islamism's ideology and practice are also outlined, showing its historical role as an ideology of protest against ruling elites who deviate from the moral dictates of leadership. Islamism's important historical pioneers include Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) and Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab (d. 1792).

This is followed by a neat, tight outline of "the general characteristics of fundamentalist ideology," including the links between state and religion, the Koran and the Sunnah, social justice, legitimate leadership, and puritanical society, among others. The techniques of ideological propagation and the target audiences of Islamism are outlined and categorised, followed by an overview of the appeal of the Islamist alternative to its followers and even indices of Islamic revivalism broken down into categories of passive and activist fundamentalism, such as mosque attendance, meditation and reading the Koran, participation in neighbourhood self-help activities, and wearing distinctive clothing.

By this stage of the book, we are well introduced to one of the slightly novel,

occasionally irritating, but always substantive aspects of this unusual empirical approach: the taxonomic dedication to lists and more lists. This penchant reaches its height in chapter five, entitled "Taxonomy of Islamist Societies and Arab Regimes." Here the author shows both the large number of Islamist societies in the Arab World (over 300 he says, of which he lists 175 in the very useful appendix) and their wide range of principles, aims and methods of operation. He breaks them down into four broad types: gradualist-pragmatic, revolutionary Shi'ite, revolutionary Sunni, and messianic-puritanical. The leaderships of these societies are similarly classified into four broad types: mujaddid (restorer of the faith), mahdi (the expected messiah), marji' (the religious-juridical stewardship of the learned ulama as exemplified by a righteous single person), and murshid (guide).

This chapter also provides an empirical analysis of Islamist groups' charismatic/bureaucratic leaderships, sectarian identity (79 per cent are Sunni), size (about 58 per cent of the 175 listed groups are small, with less than one thousand activists), their current legal status (about half are banned), and their country of origin (the largest number, 40, are from Egypt) and their transnational ties. These attributes are then analysed to reveal patterns or relationships among them, confirming the established trend of small, clandestine groups led by charismatic individuals, which usually evolve into large, public groups led by bureaucratic organisations. The chapter ends with a classification of regimes and their responses to Islamist groups, which sets the stage for the next section of the book.

The case studies of Islamist groups in part two provide the deeper narratives that support the classifications in part one. The longest chapter on Egypt, the "cradle of Islamism," is warranted because "the Society of Muslim Brothers, more than any other organisation, has been the ideological and institutional epicentre of fundamentalism in the Arab sphere and the Islamic World." The movement's birth in 1929 by Hassan Al Banna is reviewed within its domestic and regional context, which helps explain the advent of more militant Islamist groups in Egypt since the 1970s. The chapter's detailed programmes of some Islamists offer insights not otherwise easily available to the general reader. The chapters on Syrian, Iraqi and

Lebanese Islamism show very different kinds of organisations and contexts, further highlighting the wide range of ideas within the broad framework of contemporary Arab Islamism. The list of Islamist leaders in Syria is especially interesting for what it reveals about the background and education of the people involved. I found the chapter on Saudi Arabia the most useful, for it sheds much light on a movement not well documented in this closed society. The rise of Islamist opposition and the counter-policies of the state are juxtaposed in a manner that captures the full dimensions of the contemporary political, social and economic contexts of Arab culture. The chapter on the other Gulf states is not long enough to provide much detailed information or analysis, but does indicate the Islamist phenomenon's emergence in those lands as well as in the poorer quarters of the Arab World. The brief treatment of some Arab states, sometimes just two pages, is an occasional weakness of the book.

The last part of the book explores the "new frontiers of Islamism," particularly the interplay between Islamist politics and the ruling establishments in many Arab states. The author once again offers a series of lists to show the different debates that have led to structural transformations among Islamists in recent years, such as Islamists/secularists and radicals/gradualists. Egypt again gets the most space, but the chapter would be strengthened with the inclusion of more explanations of the important role the Islamists played as purveyors of street-level social services to the poor in areas where the Egyptian government performed badly. This aspect of the Islamist appeal has been an important initial reason for its success to date, and should be better documented in future editions.

Sudan, Libya and Yemen, along with Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, are surveyed for their handling of the Islamist phenomenon, showing the wide variety of Islamist approaches and government responses. These sections are rather brief but nevertheless give a good overview of the chequered Islamist condition in the Arab World; the weakness of this section, especially on Algeria, is the lack of attention to the violence used by governments against Islamists and others in society, which is also an important reason for rising support for some Arab Islamists.

The last chapter in the book is an analyt-

ical assessment of the Islamists' prospects, based on the structural changes their movements have experienced since the early 1980s. Mainstream centrist Islamism (Al Wasatiyyah) is mentioned as the dominant form in the Arab World today, and its six main attributes are listed and assessed. The author acknowledges Islamism's considerable successes as a spiritual escape from alienation, a means of protest against injustice, a setter of ethical standards, and an ideology of revolutionary mobilisation — attributes, I would add, that are paralleled in the politicisation of other religions in other parts of the world, making Islamism less peculiar and more in keeping with universalist religiopolitical phenomena.

Yet, he also notes Islamism's often fractionalised condition and inability in most Arab states to share power or deliver on its many promises. Islamism, like most other religious and political ideologies, contains the seeds of both liberalism and totalitarianism. The author implicitly reminds us that this politicised religion can generate fine or ignoble deeds, and that in the final analysis it is largely a reflection of and reaction to the many underlying, poor conditions and crises that have plagued the modern Arab World.

The book ends with a rare, rather dramatic list of 175 Islamist societies that operated in the Arab World in the 1970s-1990s, an excellent glossary of Islamic terms, and a useful bibliography and index.

With this and other books on similar themes, Syracuse University Press continues to develop its expertise, credibility and timeliness in Middle Eastern affairs, and it is to be praised for addressing the Islamist issue from such a thoughtful perspective. Some readers may disagree with the author's empirical approach, and I sometimes found its list-making a bit taxing. But the result is a thorough portrait of the principles, organisation, and other logistical dimensions of Islamism in the Arab World, though with less information about the full causes of the phenomenon or the effectiveness of the Islamists within existing Arab political cultures. I recommend this book highly for readers who seek to understand the fundamentals of Arab/Islamic fundamentalism, especially within its full historical and causal context.

Rami G. Khouri

The Saturday Crossword

JUST FOR FUN
By Marianne A. Baran

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Diagramless, 15x19
By Harold B. Counts

ACROSS

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Ministry of Transport draws programme to restructure, regulate public transport sector

By Issam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The losses of the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) have reached JD13 million and are rising by JD100,000 each month. Ministry of Transport Secretary General Isa Ayyoub said Friday.

Mr. Ayyoub indicated that the government has drawn up a programme to restructure and regulate the public

transport sector, through privatisation, in order to stop the continued losses and to ensure that good services are offered to passengers.

The secretary general said a draft law for establishing a transport regulatory commission has been prepared and that it will be referred to the Parliament soon.

He pointed out that the new law will empower the ministry to adopt new

strategies and policies. "The transport regulatory commission will be given the power to supervise and control the public transport sector and the private sector will be empowered to develop and operate this sector," he explained.

Mr. Ayyoub said the government will support the Jordanian private and foreign investors to invest in developing, modernising and upgrading the efficiency of the transport sector.

He mentioned that the restructuring process will be finalised by the end of March 1998, and that contracts to supervise and control the transport sector will be signed by July 1998. "By then, the PTC will stop operating the sector and offering services to the public as new companies will take over its role in operating new buses by March 1999."

Israel raises final funds from \$10b guarantee

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel raised \$1.4 billion on the U.S. bond market this week, using up the last of \$10 billion in loan guarantees granted by the U.S. government in 1992, officials said Thursday.

The finance ministry said it completed floating the last batch of U.S.-backed bonds on the U.S. market Tuesday night.

The loan guarantees accorded by the U.S. Agency for International Development

were agreed by Washington to help Israel absorb a wave of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

But with a fall off in immigration in 1995, Washington agreed to allow the borrowed funds to be used for other infrastructure development.

Under the agreement, Israel had six years to take advantage of the loan guarantee.

The U.S. guarantee allowed Israel to raise funds at particu-

larly low rates of interest. For its last and biggest operation, the treasury floated bonds with an interest rate of 6.063 per cent, just above the yield for 30-year U.S. notes.

But to signal its opposition to Israel's policy of building Jewish settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, Washington withheld over the six-year life of the guarantee a total of \$700 million from the \$10 billion originally accorded.

The loan guarantee was approved by then U.S. President George Bush after Labour Party leader Yitzhak Rabin replaced the right-wing nationalist Yitzhak Shamir as Israel's prime minister.

Rabin went on to freeze construction in most Jewish settlements while negotiating the Oslo peace accords with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation.

World Bank approves loan for Gaza industrial park

TEL AVIV (R) — The World Bank has approved a \$10 million credit to finance an export-oriented industrial park at the Karni Crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, the Bank of Israel said Friday.

The \$84.5 million project is also receiving financing from the European Investment Bank, the International Finance Corp. and the United States Agency for International Development.

The project will help the Palestinian National Authority create an environment for private sector investment, including building the infrastructure for industrial activity. It will generate up to 20,000 direct permanent jobs and nearly 30,000 indirect jobs in the Gaza Strip.

The private sector is expected to invest \$200 million in the industrial park, the Bank of Israel said. The \$10 million World Bank credit is from the Trust Fund for Gaza and the West Bank, with a 40-year maturity, including a 10-year grace period.

Saudis seen earning less from oil in 1998 despite higher output

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia's oil export earnings are expected to slide nearly 14 per cent in 1998 although production will increase by more than 700,000 barrels per day (bpd), a bank study has forecast.

Net oil revenues of the world's top oil producer and exporter are projected at 131.5 billion Saudi riyals (\$35 billion) from around 149 billion riyals (\$40 billion) in 1997, said the study by Henry Azzam, chief economist at the National Commercial Bank, the biggest bank in Saudi Arabia.

"These are conservative estimates given the increase in the kingdom's oil production in 1998 compared with the previous year," Mr. Azzam said in the study published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Khaleej.

Saudi Arabia was allocated an additional 760,000 bpd over its quota of eight million bpd by the 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries at its meeting in November as part of an overall hike in the group's ceiling.

Buoyed by the increase, Riyadh planned to maintain high spending levels in 1998 as was the case in the previous two years, when oil prices were strong.

But crude prices this month dived to their lowest

level in four years and Mr. Azzam said they could average between \$15 and \$16 in 1998, compared with \$19.06 in 1997 and \$20.7 in 1996.

With the new increase in Saudi Arabia's oil quota, its crude exports, which provide more than two thirds of the kingdom's total income, are now estimated at a little over seven million bpd.

Mr. Azzam, one of the best-known economists in the Gulf, said high oil prices turned Saudi Arabia's long-standing deficit in the current account into a surplus of \$57 million in 1996 and \$214 million in 1997.

The account accumulated a shortfall of more than \$50 billion between 1991 and 1994 because of large payments for the 1991 Gulf War.

After growing 8.6 per cent in 1996 and 7.1 per cent in 1997, Saudi Arabia's gross domestic product is forecast to rise by around two per cent in current prices this year, Azzam said, adding real growth would be around 1.5 per cent.

Saudi Arabia controls more than a quarter of the world's recoverable oil reserves of one trillion barrels and its GDP of \$145.9 billion in 1997 exceeded a quarter of the Arab World's total economy.

Lebanon's 1998 budget forecasts a trimmed deficit

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's government has presented its 1998 budget to parliament, forecasting a deficit trimmed to \$1.7 billion.

Last year's deficit was \$3.5 billion, 22 per cent higher than the forecast.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's government has set targets of lower deficits for several years, but has failed to meet them.

The 1998 budget forecasts expenditure over the fiscal year January-December of 7,200 billion Lebanese pounds (\$4.7 billion) and revenue of 4,600 billion pounds (\$3 billion). The deficit would be 2,600 billion pounds (\$1.7 billion).


A big chunk of the budget's expenditure goes to servicing the national debt of \$14 billion, which is owed largely to local banks at high interest rates.

Spending this year is projected to be higher than what was forecast for 1997 — 6,400 billion pounds (\$4.2 billion) — but much lower than the actual expenditure figure of 9,100 billion (\$6 billion) last year.

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For Jordanians & Foreign Residents



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Early Check/In, Late Check/Out, Free Parking.

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JD 15,000 extra for Single accommodation.

For Children:
Children under 12 years are free of charge
sharing their parent's room, including meals
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THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Spinner on the "Enterprise"
- First family of Ferrara
- Heroic Horatio
- Actor Epps
- Enlightenment
- Key FL
- Red followers
- Language suffix
- Part in a play
- Indian
- Zoroastrian
- Black goo
- Gladators' 56
- Comperative phrase
- Cause bodily injury
- Native American tribe
- Actress Ryan
- Church calendar
- Jumps aboard
- Wedding vow
- White followers
- Morse symbol
- Artist of the dollar bill
- Ye Shoppe
- Old French coin
- Contemporary Irish singer
- God of war
- "I Remember Mama" son
- Colorado hrs.
- French friend
- Moon of Jupiter
- AM-PM connection
- Intardiction
- Blue followers
- Japanese poem
- Zeno of
- Millennia
- Korbut et al.
- Foot pref.
- Macbeth's dagger

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- Nincompoop
- Singer Ed
- Red followers
- Avant-garde French sculptor
- Spanish river
- Mort, the comic
- Sched. abbr.
- Seaweed
- Metacall of "Roseanne"
- Blue followers
- Well-plumed bird
- Roundup finale
- Slip up
- Printer resolution: abbr.
- Wildly out of control
- Sacristy
- Foundry form
- Piece of Puccini
- Drink voucher
- Rascals
- L-P connection
- Eight: pref.
- Miami's county
- Hematite and galena
- Tahquah, OK school
- Fertile soil
- Former Dolphin running back
- Slender: pref.
- Of the ear
- Bub
- Santa winds
- Sch. orgs.
- Opinion page, briefly
- Town near Santa Barbara
- Top-notch
- Wall St. abbr.
- Cadence court
- Okay

Peanuts

WAKE UP! SANTA CLAUS CAME LAST NIGHT AND DIDN'T LEAVE YOU ANYTHING!

APRIL FOOL!

Andy Capp

GIVE ME YOUR GLASS AND I'LL GET TWO MORE

MUCH THE SAME, TOW. STILL A BIT OF AN EXHIBITIONIST

INSISTS ON GETTING THE DRINKS HERSELF INSTEAD OF SLIPPING ME THE MONEY FOR ME TO GET THEM

YOU SHOULD PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN

Mutt'n' Jeff

JEFF IT'S A CHANCE TO MAKE A KILLING! YOU HAVE SOME MONEY — AND I'LL TAKE IT

YOU HEARD ABOUT THAT MONEY, WELL, MINE'S TIGHTER THAN A BARTFLY!

LOOK, THESE STOCKS ARE AT THEIR LOWEST NOW! THEY'RE BOUND TO GO UP AGAIN ANY DAY NOW!

SORRY MUTT, I INVEST MY MONEY IN TAXES!

TAXES?

YEH, THEY'RE ALWAYS GOING UP!

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) There's an opportunity to travel. Make it happen. It will clear out the mental cobwebs and give you new ideas. You tend to get bogged down in the details. Today, look at the big picture, from a moving vehicle if possible. Take along your favourite people. The conversations you have today will be almost more important than anything else.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get the errands done as quickly as possible. There's pressure on you to act and there's a person reminding you to do so. Once you get this chore handled, you'll be free to run and play tomorrow. Set up some sort of fascinating adventure as your reward for all the trouble you're going to right now.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Travel will not be fun, but different. Don't procrastinate. You don't have much time left. Even tomorrow isn't as good as today. Grab your favourite partner and take off. Just pick a direction. Even that is subject to change as the day progresses. Follow a whim and let your conscience be your guide.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You'll have to scramble to keep up. There are changes happening every few minutes. Just when you think things are going one way, somebody calls and cancels out on you. You'll go to the store to get one thing and end up buying another. Maybe you should delegate this whole assignment.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You and a friend want to romp and play, so why not? If you're travelling this weekend, get an early start. Some people think it's romantic to be lazy, but you find it more romantic to get out and be active. You might even take on a work project together. You don't have to explain yourselves to anyone.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Some people are always pushing the outside of the envelope. They want to make everything go faster or farther, or do something it was probably never meant to do. You don't mind much people. In fact, you find them kind of fun. Remember that today, if you start getting nervous.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is an absolutely marvellous day for you. You're finding it easier to make decisions, you're learning quickly, and you're even more intelligent than usual. Use this situation to your advantage. Talk your true love into doing something you've been wanting to do for ages.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Conditions are good for shopping for household items. You might want to get something big. If you need to take out a loan, the morning is a good time to check out the possibilities. If several people would use this, get them to pitch in, too. No reason to buy the whole thing by yourself.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The sun is in Aquarius and the moon is in your sign again. You're going to be competent, intelligent and, of course, fabulously good-looking. Since this is such a lucky day for you, you might as well go ahead and make some tough decisions you've been thinking about. Your analytical mind is working well.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) There's a list of things to do this weekend. You won't have to remember them. The person who wants them done will remind you. If you could get that person to work as hard as he or she is talking, the job would be done by now. But don't be cranky. This person doesn't realise how much trouble it is.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It's going to be an easy day for you to learn new information. It'll come from a friend, and you may not have to work at it much at all. This may even be a confirmation of something you already knew through experience. At any rate, you'll have the chance to put it to work for you. Have a great time while you're at it.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You're still a little jittery. You should be starting to get used to it by now. There are rules and regulations with which you have to comply. If you do a certain thing, you get a predictable result. That may not happen with everything you do today, but try to look at your agenda with that in mind.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen

GIASBERGEN

"It sounds more impressive if you say I weigh 225 gigabytes."

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter in each square, to form four ordinary words.

SYSUF

YILCI

LEPOAR

VAHBEE

Answer here: A

WHAT THE BARBER EXPERIENCED ON HIS WAY TO WORK

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Yesterday's Jumbles: DECRY ARDOR FIDDLE ALIGHT
Answer: When the bushes needed cutting he — "HEDGE"

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

JIEC will float tender this week to expand Irbid industrial estate — Majali

THE JORDAN Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC) will float a tender this week to enlarge Al Hassan Industrial Estate in Irbid. The expansion, estimated to cost about JD2 million, will cover a 220-dunum area, JIEC Director General Amer Majali has said. He indicated that the decision to enlarge the estate was due to the fact that it was fully occupied and that the JIEC was receiving tens of requests from investors to set up textile, weaving and carpet industries at the estate.

Mr. Majali said the expansion would provide space for 50 firms, specialised in textile manufacturing, to be set up by Jordanian companies with large capital. He explained that demand for setting up industries in Irbid has increased after the products manufactured in the city's industrial zone were qualified to enter the U.S. markets free from customs tariffs.

The JIEC revealed that work will start today (Saturday) to implement the first stage of the Karak Industrial Estate. The work on the first stage will include the complete infrastructure network, the main and secondary roads, the sewage network and the wastewater treatment plan, the electricity and communications

network in addition to the administration building, the multi-purpose hall, the compound for supporting services and the compound for the banks, the cafeteria and the supermarket. The Karak project, Mr. Majali said, is expected to cost JD7 million for the first stage.

He said the JIEC has started to receive applications from Jordanian and Arab investors to invest in the Karak Industrial Estate which is expected to ease the unemployment rate by creating 2,500 job opportunities. In addition, the project will curb the flow of people to other main cities and will activate other economic functions in the area. Furthermore, Mr. Majali said the JIEC will take the task of teaching and training the people in the Karak and neighbouring areas, at the corporation's expense, to enable them to enter the workplace.

Mr. Majali revealed that the corporation was near completing the acquisition of 2,200 dunums to be able to begin the Mafrqa Industrial Estate. The corporation has completed the appropriation of 4,064 dunums to set up Al Hasa Industrial Estate which will be assigned for chemical industries (Al Dimsour).

Trading at the stock exchange and the general price index drop

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Turnover at the Amman stock exchange dropped by 28 per cent last week from the volume posted a week ago and the general price index also declined, the weekly Amman Financial Market (AFM) bulletin showed Friday.

Brokers said dealings were weak at the start of last week, especially over the first three

days of the week, but regained strength during the last three days. "Activities at the stock market is expected to flourish after the Holy Month of Ramadan following the recession that prevailed in the AFM during the past three weeks," the brokers indicated.

The bulletin showed that the turnover amounted to JD4.6 million compared with JD6.4 million a week ago, or a 28.1 per cent

decrease. The number of shares that changed hands amounted to 3.6 million shares, traded through 1,786 contracts. Average daily trading amounted to JD940,000.

The industrial sector won the lion's share of the trading with a total turnover amounting to JD3.3 million, or 71.9 per cent.

The banking sector ranked second with JD740,000, or 16 per cent, and was followed

by the services sector with JD520,000, or 11.2 per cent. The insurance sector trailed with JD40,000, or .09 per cent.

The largest transaction was a bloc deal, covering 884,070 shares, on Arab Potash shares, the price of which fell 0.100 dinars to JD5.700, Reuters said.

Other large transactions involved Arab Bank shares, the price of which shed one

dinar to JD319, the lowest drop since November. A bearish tone that emerged in the last quarter of 1997 has persisted in the absence of institutional buying compounded by a wait-and-see mood among small investors.

Some dealers said that worries over the breakdown in the Middle East peace process and renewed Iraq-U.S. tensions had eroded investors confidence.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLD	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7810	0.8884	1.4588	126.80	1.4081	1766.00	2.0074	6.9882
DE Mark	0.5625	1.0000	0.5352	0.8916	70.88	0.5188	1625.41	1.1270	3.2801
GB Sterling	1.1284	2.0743	1.0000	1.4588	166.09	1.2500	1636.33	1.9363	5.4756
CH Franc	0.8918	1.2312	0.6848	1.0000	136.76	0.7037	936.26	1.2500	3.5401
JP Yen	0.0074	0.1398	0.0074	0.0074	1.0000	0.0074	111.81	0.0074	0.0074
CA Dollar	0.6972	1.2748	0.4288	0.7037	110.45	1.0000	1284.78	1.4388	4.2881
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0133	0.3408	0.0822	1387.04	0.0277	1.0000	0.0277	0.0277
NL Guilder	0.4882	0.8548	0.2882	0.4288	62.88	0.7245	874.33	1.0000	2.9718
FR Franc	0.1676	0.2984	0.1004	0.1458	21.06	0.2438	33.63	0.1000	0.1000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LRP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7500	0.3770	0.3400	0.3677	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2891	0.5317	0.5154	0.4285	1.1801	2144.87	4.8096
Saudi Riyal	0.2687	0.1891	1.0000	0.2667	0.2667	0.2667	0.2667	405.47	0.9083
Bahrain Dinar	2.48	1.8808	3.9477	1.0000	0.8078	0.8078	0.8078	4033.48	9.0488
Qatar Dinar	0.2746	0.1947	1.0299	1.0299	0.8078	0.8078	0.8078	417.61	0.9388
Kuwait Dinar	0.2841	0.2042	1.2153	1.2153	0.8078	0.8078	0.8078	417.61	0.9388
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0210	1.0210	0.8078	0.8078	0.8078	417.61	0.9388
Lebanese L1000	0.66	0.4663	2.4863	0.2478	0.2478	0.2478	0.2478	2.4755	2.2427
Egyptian	0.2533	0.2079	1.0997	0.1105	0.1067	0.0893	1.0770	448.89	1.0000


Energy									
Oil	Last	Previous							
Brent	14.70	14.63							
W. Texas	18.02	18.09							
Bonny	14.70	14.63							
Dubai	12.80	12.78							
UL Gas	157.00	156.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY				
SA Riyal	0.2687	0.4762	0.1898	0.3878	33.5999				
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4892	0.1932	0.3938	34.3077				
KW Dinar	0.2841	0.5153	0.1985	0.4068	41.7336				
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.7281	0.2908	0.5373	53.4225				
CY Pound	1.0035	3.3907	1.1404	2.7621	238.574				

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Period	1 - 3 Months	3 - 6 Months	6 - 9 Months	9 - 12 Months	1 - 2 Years				
USD	5.48	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50				
GBP	7.38	7.31	7.31	7.31	7.31				
JPY	0.39	0.42	0.46	0.43	0.43				
DEM	3.67	3.44	3.59	3.56	3.56				
FRF	3.68	3.49	3.56	3.56	3.70				
CHF	1.28	1.15	1.27	1.37	1.67				
ITL	6.20	6.07	6.70	6.34	6.10				

Main Equity Indices									
Source	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	7881.38	-8.8	-0.11	7778.87	7888.89	7730.88		
New York	S&P 500	863.88	-0.18	-0.02	868.44	863.28	863.04		
London	FT-SE 100	5191.4	-17.1	-0.33	5254.5	5172.5	5253.1		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16789.11	-383.42	-2.28	16787.1	16402.4	16408.7		
Paris	CAC 40	2986.15	-22.44	-0.75	3008.78	2964.39	2988.58		
Frankfurt	DAX	4237.31	-17.08	-0.4	4264.58	4212.53	4220.25		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (c/b)	162.68	Spot							
Cocoa (c/b)	1833	Spot							
Sugar (c/b)	298	Spot							
Wheat (c/b)	0	Spot							
Soy (c/b)	25.58	Spot							
Ten (c/b)	205	Spot							
Barley (c/b)	0	Spot							
Rice (c/b)	490	Spot							

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET														
HOUSING NAME CENTER AMMAN - SHARAFIYAH														
TELEPHONE: 607171 & 607179														
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (17/01/1998 - 23/01/1998)														
WEEKLY REPORT														
														
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
327.500	320.000	ARAB BANK	14.7	1.25	35	1480	474110	323.75	324.00	319.00	319.00	-4.75	320.345	5
1.800	1.750	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	22	12435	22540	1.80	1.81	1.77	1.79	-0.01	1.784	2
1.800	1.800	BANK OF JORDAN	4.9	0.00	36	18924	28118	1.80	1.80	1.80	1.80	0.00	1.800	5
1.300	1.000	MID-EAST INV. BK.	64.2	0.00	12	450	4749	1.00	1.04	1.01	1.04	0.03	1.018	4
1.710	1.450	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.4	6.03	24	62412	108931	1.70	1.75	1.73	1.73	0.03	1.745	5
9.240	5.130	THE HOUSING BK.	15.5	3.73	9	4800	24931	5.10	5.20	5.15	5.20	0.05	5.184	5
2.160	1.980	JOR. EDU. BK.	10.5	0.00	14	3633	7209	2.00	2.01	1.98	1.98	-0.02	1.984	5
1.800	1.400	JOR. GULF BANK	3.9	10.61	15	3100	13437	1.40	1.47	1.46	1.46	0.01	1.469	3
2.520	2.250	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	12.2	4.00	45	15443	27549	2.30	2.41	2.38	2.40	0.02	2.399	5
1.100	1.070	UNION BK. DEV. INV.	170.4	0.00	8	15663	16233	1.08	1.08	1.07	1.07	-0.01	1.078	3
2.350	2.250	JOR. INV. FUND BANK/SH	0.00	1.00	1	100	218	2.20	2.18	2.18	2.18	-0.02	2.180	1
1.800	1.750	AL-BAYT AL-HAL (REITER)	1.8	18.67	6	2400	2310	1.87	1.90	1.87	1.90	0.03	1.888	5
INDEX NUMBER : 228.18														
CHANGE : -1.20%														
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
2.890	2.750	JORDAN INSURANCE	11.6	5.56	3	2437	5880	2.75	2.70	2.70	2.70	-0.05	2.700	2
2.060	1.960	JOR. PERSIAN INSUR.	6.0	7.08	4	2000	4126	2.04	2.12	2.04	2.12	0.08	2.063	1
2.500	2.500	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	-	0.00	2	5850	14638	2.50	2.63	2.50	2.63	0.13	2.502	2
INDEX NUMBER : 121.25														
CHANGE : -0.16%														
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
1.940	1.910	JOR. ELECTRIC PHN.	9.4	5.13	41	25235	49042	1.94	1.95	1.94	1.95	0.01	1.945	5
3.560	3.380	ETHEN KILWAH	18.3	6.31	4	2115	8006	3.45	3.62	3.62	3.62	0.17	3.620	1
1.080	1.080	RAI PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	23	7495	7270	1.01	1.04	1.02	1.02	-0.01	1.025	1
1.480	1.410	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	24.1	0.00	17	10400	4575	1.45	1.47	1.43	1.47	0.02	1.440	4
1.290	1.200	MID. EAST MOTO.	6.3	0.00	6	7200	2638	1.20	1.20	1.18	1.20	0.02	1.199	4
3.980	3.840	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.3	0.00	53	45112	182349	3.84	4.00	3.92	3.93	-0.01	3.972	5
1.960	1.950	SARAA EDUCATION	0.00	12	73900	13415	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	0.00	1.950	5	
1.720	1.680	UNITED CO.	8.3	6.29	24	16750	32540	1.68	1.76	1.69	1.75	0.06	1.735	3
INDEX NUMBER : 117.04														
CHANGE : -0.22%														
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
3.150	2.900	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.4	3.43	54	12255	36712	3.01	3.03	2.97	3.03	0.02	2.994	5
4.110	3.420	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.0	4.78	4	2100	7580	3.65	3.65	3.60	3.60	-0.05	3.610	2
6.000	5.800	ARAB POTASH CO.	13.9	3.56	12	16504	923529	5.80	5.80	5.70	5.70	-0.10	5.704	1
10.700	10.350	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.51	24	5295	55801	10.58	10.75	10.45	10.45	-0.13	10.538	3
5.950	5.950	JORDAN BANKING	7.0	5.22	1	200	1150	5.95	5.75	5.75	5.75	-0.20	5.750	1
1.410	1.380	INDUSTRIAL COMM. GR.	0.00	0.00	5	352	1339	1.38	1.39	1.38	1.39	0.01	1.389	5
4.190	4.190	ARAB PHARM.	11.8	4.47	62	43731	187456	4.30	4.32	4.25	4.28	-0.02	4.287	4
4.640	4.640	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.9	4.21	1	400	1900	4.64	4.75	4.75	4.75	0.11	4.750	1
2.820	2.800	JORDAN DAIRY	9.4	8.73	3	342	958	2.83	2.80	2.80	2.80	-0.03	2.801	2
8.540	7.740	ARAB CEMENT. PHARM.	24.5	3.75	5	15600	124902	8.50	8.47	7.67	8.00	-0.50	8.007	2
1.220	1.230	3.930 RAPHA PHOSPHATE	0.00	0.00	1	150	123	1.23	1.20	1.20	1.20	-0.03	1.200	1
14.720	5.400	ARAB AEROSOL. PV. INV.	14.72	4.24	27	37932	5750	5.89	5.48	5.89	5.89	0.19	5.763	1
2.660	2.380	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.42	9	7356	5582	2.40	2.40	2.35	2.40	0.05	2.369	3
1.460	1.460	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.5	0.00	15	9000	4130	1.46	1.46	1.45	1.45	-0.01	1.459	2
1.460	1.460	NATIONAL IND.	-	0.00	12	7100	4313	1.46	1.46	1.45	1.45	-0.01	1.459	2
1.460	1.460	THE INVESTED	-	0.00	12	7100	4313	1.46	1.46	1.45	1.45	-0.01	1.459	2
1.410	1.410	JOR. ROYALTY IND.	-	0.00	3	500	276	1.41	1.41	1.40	1.40	-0.01	1.400	1
1.740	1.680	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	12.9	6.99	13	1950	2821	1.74	1.67	1.63	1.63	-0.11	1.647	3
1.370	1.190	MATL. CABLE WIRE. PHC	27.0	0.00	8	4500	5091	1.24	1.18	1.12	1.12	-0.12	1.131	1
1.420	1.420	JOR. KILWAH	0.00	0.00	50	174350	10353	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	0.00	1.420	1
1.320	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	35.3	5.83	24	1927	12715	1.18	1.20	1.17	1.20	0.02	1.180	1
1.910	1.820	UNIV. WOOD. IND.	19.1	1.25	53	55332	46938	1.86	1.86	1.84	1.84	-0.02	1.848	5
1.800	1.700	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.8	13.70	9	2265	1625	1.72	1.73	1.71	1.73	0.01	1.717	2
1.460	1.460	MATL. CHLORINE	13.8	4.79	2	6000	8800	1.46	1.47	1.46	1.46	-0.01	1.467	1
1.910	1.890	JOR. KIM CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	21	10600	9000	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	0.00	1.900	1
1.560	1.360	KL. RAY RAY RAY RAY	49.3	0.00	3	2300	3290	1.47	1.45	1.40	1.40	-0.07	1.400	1
1.250	1.170	IND. TOROACO	6.6	0.00	38	8234	100662	1.20	1.21	1.19	1.20	0.01	1.202	3
1.040	0.970	UNION CH. & VEG.	45.5	0.00	5	1651	1652	1.01	1.02	1.00	1.00	-0.01	1.001	3
1.740	1.720	JORDAN STEEL	32.1	7.04	49	59325	70991	1.73	1.72	1.71	1.71	-0.02	1.715	6
1.640	1.580	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.6	16.13	93	924150	610838	1.64	1.67	1.61	1.62	-0.02	1.641	5
INDEX NUMBER : 111.01														
CHANGE : -1.00%														
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS														
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
1.000	1.000	JOR. INT. INSURANCE CO	-	0.00	2	10000	10000	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.000	2
1.100	1.100	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	-	0.00	1	3250	1105	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.100	1
1.380	1.350	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.1	0.00	45	86400	32747	1.38	1.38	1.37	1.38	0.01	1.377	5
1.530	1.450	ARAB FID. INVEST.	-	0.00	127	283018	147567	1.51	1.56	1.47	1.50	-0.01	1.521	5
1.710	1.700	UNION INV. 304	-	0.00	23	49287	10348	1.71	1.71	1.71	1.71	0.00	1.710	1
1.200	1.130	SARAA FOR INVESTMENT	49.3	0.00	1	1006	1006	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.100	1
1.920	1.910	AL-BAYT AL-HAL	223.9	0.00	4	28200	25944	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	0.00	1.920	1
2.220	1.900	CENTURY INV. GROUP	-	0.00	1	250	513	1.95	2.05	2.05	2.05	0.10	2.052	1
1.470	1.450	ARAB FOOD & MED.	-	0.00	3	7000	815	1.46	1.46	1.45	1.45	-0.01	1.459	1
1.390	1.380	ARAB INTL. INV. DR.	32.2	0.00	18	71959	6180	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	0.00	1.380	1
1.170	1.160	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.8	13.70	9	2265	1625	1.16	1.16	1.15	1.15	-0.01	1.152	1
1.370	1.350	NATKAS DIES & MOLD	-	0.00	3	150	221	1.35	1.34	1.34	1.34	-0.01	1.340	1
1.450	1.440	MID-EAST PHARM. 504	-	0.00	14	21800	13844	1.44	1.45	1.43	1.43	-0.01	1.433	1
1.460	1.410	ARAB ELECT. IND.	-	0.00	9	3194	1471	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	0.00	1.450	1
1.500	1.480	UNION TOROACO	6.6	0.00	2	1800	1800	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	0.00	1.480	1
1.710	1.680	RASI PHARM.	-	0.00	31	45107	31899	1.70	1.72	1.68	1.71	0.01	1.707	5
1.990	1.970	ARAB PHARM./ACTION	-	0.00	19	147711	118435	1.97	1.97	1.97	1.97	0.00	1.970	1
1.990	1.970	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	-	0.00	52	40621	23664	1.97	1.97	1.97	1.97	0.00	1.970	1
1.400	1.400	IND. ENG.	-	0.00	1	2805	2805	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.40	0.00	1.400	1
1.560	1.560	IND. CERAMIC	14.9	0.00	5	2650	1517	1.58	1.58	1.57	1.57	-0.01	1.572	1
1.560	1.560	NATL. POULTRY	-	0.00	32	38169	21014	1.55	1.56	1.54	1.55	0.01	1.551	3
1.990	1.990	OPTICAL WEAVING 75	-	0.00	3	150	78	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.99	0.00	1.990	1
1.990	1.990	READY MIX CONCRETE	12.4	0.00	1	2805	2805	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.99	0.00	1.990	1
1.990	1.990	NAT. ALUMINUM. 75	94.4	0.00	23	23491	10098	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	0.00	1.980	1
1.100	1.070	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	32.2	0.00	4	3767	2764	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.000	1
1.310	1.300	MUTIRAD	-	0.00	62	32319	37604	1.29	1.21	1.14	1.18	0.07	1.164	5
1.000	0.950	KALAM PRINT CO. 75	-	0.00	29	161800	94945	0.95	1.00	0.91	0.91	-0.04	0.987	1
1.640	1.640	MOHAMED FOOD IND. 75	8445.6	0.00	1	250	95	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	0.00	1.640	1
1.990	1.990	MID. FOOD 75 ACTION	0.00	0.00	30	285070	105476	1.99	1.99	1.99	1.9			

Olympic torch relay starts in Nagano

NAGANO (AFP) — An Olympic flame relay started in Nagano Friday, 15 days before the central Japanese city hosts the last Winter Games of the century.

Minoru Kobayashi, director-general of the Nagano Olympic Organising Committee, passed the silver-coloured torch to the first runner, Yohei Kazama from Kawakami village, eastern Nagano.

"We have only 15 days to go to the Olympics," Kobayashi told the opening ceremony at Kawakami village hall. "I hope all the torch runners hold out during the relay."

Kazama, a 14-year-old student, left with other runners in light snow from the hall, where 11 Japanese traditional drummers gave a performance.

The symbolic flame had to be fixed by organisers following a series of embarrassing flame blowouts in the nationwide relays leading to the Games opening on February 7.

Organisers attached a plate to the torch to prevent a backflow of air into the propane gas nozzle.

But the accidents still made the first runner nervous. "I was so worried about whether the flame would be blown out," Kazama said after passing the flame to the next relay runner.

The flame, which has been relayed by thousands of people, including celebrities, through three separate routes across the nation, will cover major corners of the Olympic city before arriving at the main stadium.

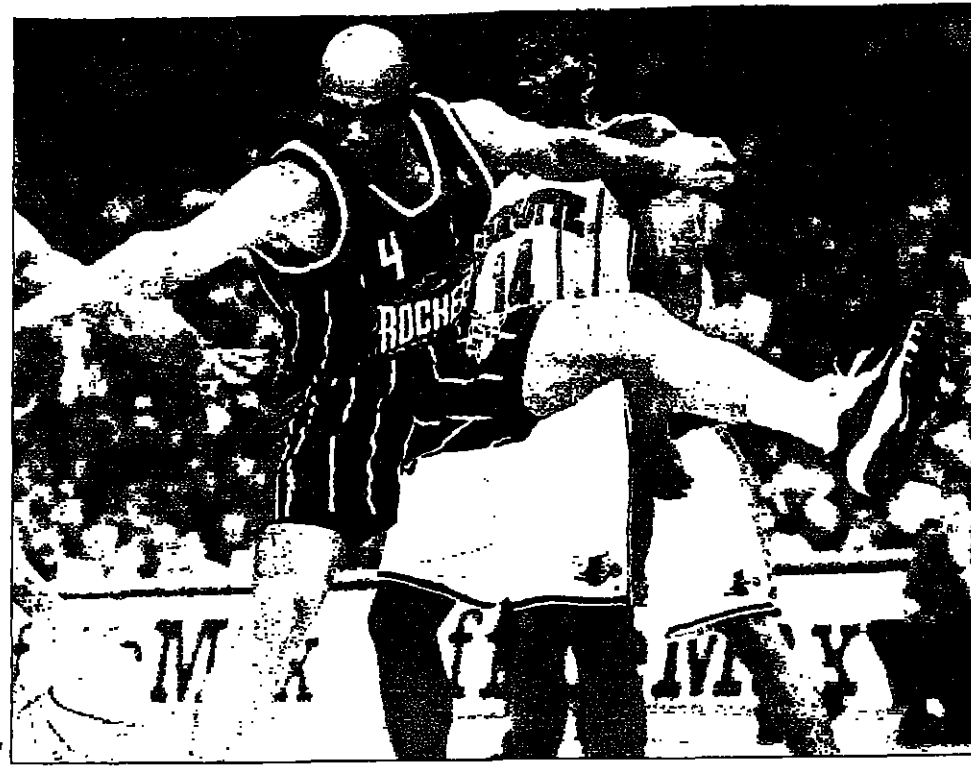
The flame arrived in Tokyo late last month after being lit at Olympia, Greece, the ancient birthplace of the Olympic Games, on December 19.

The 18th Winter Olympics, the second to be held in Asia after the 1972 Games in the Japanese city of Sapporo, is expected to be the largest ever winter competition with a record entry.

Relay participants, mostly Japanese citizens, included celebrities such as senior tour professional golfer Isao Aoki, male pop singer Koichi Domoto and former boxing world champions Hiroshi Kawashima and Yasuei Yakushiji.

The flame will also be relayed by foreigners, including British anti-landmine activist Chris Moon, who lost his right leg and right hand while mine clearing, organisers said.

Midori Ito, a former figure skating world champion and Olympic silver medalist, has been chosen for the final run to light the cauldron at the main stadium at the highlight of the opening ceremony.



Houston Rockets forward Charles Barkley loses control of the ball January 22 as he drove to the basket, running into Charlotte Hornets' forward Anthony Mason (14) (Reuters photo)

Cavaliers snap losing streak

CLEVELAND (AP) — Shawn Kemp scored 29 points as Cleveland snapped a three-game home losing streak with a 112-96 victory over the Sacramento Kings on Thursday night.

It was the Cavaliers' highest point total of the season.

Rookie point guard Brevin Knight had another stellar game with 10 points, 16 assists and five steals. Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 14 points and 13 rebounds, and another rookie, Cedric Henderson, had 16 points for Cleveland.

Mitch Richmond scored 31 points for the Kings, who lost their fourth straight.

Charlotte Hornets 93, Houston Rockets 86: At Charlotte, North Carolina, David Wesley scored 26 points, including consecutive 3-pointers during a crucial stretch in the fourth quarter, as the Charlotte Hornets beat the Houston Rockets.

After Houston's Clyde Drexler tied it 83-

83 on a three-point play with 3:01 left, Charlotte took the lead for good with a 10-0 run that started with Glen Rice's jumper from the top of the key.

Rice scored 19 points for the Hornets, while Matt Geiger had 13 points and 16 rebounds and Anthony Mason finished with 10 points and 13 rebounds.

Drexler led Houston with 20 points. Matt Maloney had 19 points, and Charles Barkley finished with 13 for the Rockets.

Detroit Pistons 94, Los Angeles Clippers 76: In the Los Angeles suburb of Anaheim, grant hill scored 35 points to lead the Detroit Pistons over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Joe Dumars hit a 3-pointer to start a 9-0 run that put Detroit in front 89-69 with 2:23 left in the game.

The Pistons played without Brian Williams, who missed his first game of the season because of tendinitis in his left knee.

Cuche wins first downhill

KITZBUHEL, Austria (AFP) — Switzerland's Didier Cuche won his first ever World Cup race when he took the two-leg downhill here on Friday in a combined time of 2mins 31.55secs.

France filled second a third sports with Nicolas Burtin (2:31.69) and Jean-Luc Cretier (2:31.87).

It was an impressive victory by the 23-year-old Cuche who led after the first run. It also gave Switzerland their first downhill success since Bruno Kernen in 1996.

The second run was interrupted for 30 minutes when Austrian Roland Assinger, 15th in the first run, crashed heavily and had to be taken to hospital by helicopter.

First reports said he was suffering from a dislocated shoulder.

Austrian eagles set to swoop on Nagano

PARIS (AFP) — Austrian ski racers, who could win only two medals at Lillehammer four years ago, threaten a gold rush at the Nagano Olympic Alpine events.

A resurgent men's team, led by one-time bricklayer Hermann Maier, have won three-quarters of all World Cup races this season, although the women's honours have been more evenly spread.

The 25-year-old Maier has already won seven World Cup races and was disqualified after another win for taking off a ski too early to give his sponsor more TV time.

Maier, who also earned a living as a ski instructor when he failed to make the Austrian team for a few years, looks assured of giving Austria their first World Cup overall title since the legendary Karl Schranz 28 years ago.

Unlike Schranz, who was barred from the Olympics for being a professional the last time they were held in Japan, at Sapporo in 1972, Maier seems destined for Olympic glory.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the ski-mad Austrians is themselves and the intense rivalry for Olympic places could lead to their own downfall.

Only four skiers can race each Olympic event and currently the Austrians have seven in the top 14.

"It is the coaches who will decide who goes to the Olympics," said Maier. "If you are first on the podium then you go to Nagano. There is more pressure on us to qualify for the Olympics than to race in the World Cup."

Patrick Ortlieb, the 1992 Olympic downhill champion, who is unlikely to be in Nagano, agreed.

"It's a bit tense at the moment. Everyone is so intent on making the Olympic team, we're not really congratulating each other when we win," he admitted.

It brings back memories of 1980 when the Austrians dropped defending champion Franz Klammer on the

eve of the men's downhill in Lake Placid, USA, and plumped for unheralded Leonhard Stock.

Luckily for head coach "Downhill Charlie" Kahr he came up with a winner, although Stock did not win another race for nine years.

That's often the case with the Olympics, a winner popping up out of nowhere and just as quickly retreating into oblivion.

Tommy Moe, the American who won the downhill gold medal and Super-G silver at Lillehammer, has struggled manfully to reach Olympic heights again and the Austrian cause has been helped by injuries which have slowed Swiss giant slalom champion Michel Von Gruenigen and Kjetil Andre Aamodt.

Norway's 1994 World Cup champion may be galvanised by the idea of returning to Japan where he won two gold medals and one silver when the 1993 world championships were held at Morioka.

Maier could medal in all four events, especially as the downhill will only be a 1m 40sec dash down Mount Hakuba.

Andreas Schifferer, pushed into imitating Maier's reckless racing in downhill, and Thomas Stangassinger, the defending Olympic slalom titleholder who has got back into the winning habit, must also be short-odds.

However, Alberto Tomba cannot be written off. The Italian who proclaimed himself as the Messiah of skiing when he won two gold medals in the 1988 Calgary Olympics is always in contention when fit and confident.

He appears to have found both ingredients with a timely win this season which could propel La Tomba to a fourth Olympic gold medal.

And Norway's Lasse Kjus, the 1994 Olympic combined champion and 1996 World Cup champion who won three silver medals in the 1997 world championships in Sestriere, Italy, is due some better luck.

Katja Seizinger, the millionaire's daughter from Germany, looks a certainty for the women's downhill gold but that result may depend on how fit Picabo Street is.

The breezy American, whose hippie parents saddled her with a first name meaning Shining Water in American Indian, won the 1996 world championship after taking silver in Lillehammer. She made a delayed start to the season after knee surgery and must now live up to all the hype. Combined world champion Renate Goetschl of Austria, the World Cup downhill champion, has also beaten Seizinger this season.

If past form on the Olympic course is anything to go by, Russian Warwara Zelenskaja won the World Cup downhill on Mount Hakuba last year ahead of World Cup champion Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden and Goetschl.

The retirement of the Swiss great Vreni Schneider and injury to Wiberg has thrown open the slalom race.

However, the Swedes have already found a stand-in in the shape of 28-year-old psychology student Ylva Noren, who has won four races in succession this season after waiting seven years for her first win.

Salzburg-born Claudia Riegler, girlfriend of Austrian slalom-ace Thomas Sykora, could give New Zealand their second Alpine skiing medal after Annelise Coberger's slalom silver in 1992.

But the first real Oceanic champion might be Sydney-born Zali Steggall who became the first Australian woman to win on the World Cup circuit this season.

Deborah Compagnoni of Italy looks a safe bet to keep her giant slalom title after racking up nine straight World Cup Giant slalom wins.

But for the men's winners, look no further than the Austrian eagles.

SCOREBOARD

Spanish Cup

Valencia 1 FC Barcelona 3
Barcelona qualify for the quarter-finals 5-2 on aggregate

NBA

Charlotte 93 Houston 86
Cleveland 112 Sacramento 96
Detroit 94 LA Clippers 76

NHL

Pittsburgh 3 New Jersey 2
Philadelphia 4 NY Rangers 3
Carolina 4 Ottawa 2
Toronto 3 Chicago 0
St Louis 3 NY Islanders 3 (OT)
Anaheim 4 Colorado 3
Los Angeles 3 Florida 1

Italian Cup

Atalanta 1 AC Parma 1
Parma won 2-1 on aggregate

GOREN BRIDGE

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AND TANNAN HIRSH

TECHNIQUE OF A MASTER

Neither vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ J 10 7 6 2
♥ 8 7 4
♦ A 4 2

WEST
♠ 8 4
♥ Q 8 5
♦ Q 10 7 4 3
♣ K 6 3

EAST
♠ A Q 8 3
♥ 2
♦ A K 8 2
♣ Q J 10 7

SOUTH
♠ K 5
♥ A K J 10 8 3
♦ 9 6
♣ 9 8 5

The bidding:
NORTH SOUTH WEST NORTH
1♣ 2♣ Pass Pass Pass
2♦ 3♦ Pass Pass Pass
3♥ 4♥ Pass Pass Pass
4♠ 5♠ Pass Pass Pass
6♠ 7♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♠

The late Terence Reese could well lay claim to being the best player of his day. Here's an example of his skill, from the 1951 British National Pairs.

After East's one-spade opening bid, Reese's two-heart overall was passed back to East, who responded with a double. Since West had not yet bid, the double was for takeout.

Needless to say, making two hearts doubled was a clear top on the board. It is on hands such as this that Reese's reputation was built.

but West elected to convert it to penalties — a typical matchpoint decision.

West led a spade. East rose with the ace and returned the suit in the hope partner could ruff — a club shift would have defeated the contract one trick. Declarer's king won, and he made the cunning lead of the ten of hearts. West was not taken in, however, and grabbed the queen of hearts to shift to the three of clubs. The full beauty of the ten of hearts play now became apparent.

Declarer rose with dummy's ace of clubs and ruffed a spade high. The three of hearts was led and, when West produced the five, the table's seven was finessed. When this hold, declarer was able to ruff another spade high, setting up a long spade in dummy. The six of hearts to the nine drew West's last trump and provided declarer with the entry to cash the jack of spades for a minor-suit discard. The defenders were held to one spade, one heart and three tricks in the minors.

Needless to say, making two hearts doubled was a clear top on the board. It is on hands such as this that Reese's reputation was built.

Elvis, Tara and Kwan face Russian rivals for figure skating gold

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Figure skating's burning questions will find icy answers here on Nagano's White Ring arena rink.

Can a 17-year-old Asian-American girl named after a Beatles' song realize a golden dream? Or will she fall to a pixie-like 15-year-old compatriot named after the mansion Tara in the movie "Gone With the Wind"?

Can Elvis finally be the Olympic king? Or will rising Russian stars sweep all the skating gold at the Winter Games?

Figure skating showdowns should be some of the most exciting moments of the fortnight, with reigning world champions Elvis Stojko of Canada and Tara Lipinski of the United States hard pressed to claim titles.

Stojko, edged for gold at the 1994 Games by Russia's Alexei Urmanov, lost to Russia's Ilia Kulik at the Champions Series final in Munich. He must also hold off Russia's Alexei Yagudin and American Todd Eldredge.

"In Nagano, everything is even again," Stojko said. "I will take what I have learned with me. You have to be the best you can on that day and if you deserve it, you will win."

Lipinski took Michelle Kwan's U.S. and world titles in 1997 but lost her U.S. crown to Kwan, falling on a triple flip in her short program. She recovered with seven long-program triple jumps. But Kwan has the edge.

"Coming through under all the pressure gave me great confidence and I know it's going to carry through at Nagano," Lipinski said. "There are always things I can improve on. I will be working hard on everything."

Kwan, whose parents Danny and Estella left China for a US home, skated near-flawless programs for the U.S. crown less than a month after being in a cast with a broken left toe.

"There are things I can improve on," Kwan said. "I could manage to squeeze in a few more triples. I could smile a little more after jumps."

Joined by Nicole Bobek, a 1995 world bronze medalist, U.S. skaters and coaches talked brazenly of a women's medal sweep. "We can absolutely do 1-2-3, no problem," Bobek said. "I don't see why not."

France's Vanessa Gusmeroli, 1997 world bronze medalist, is one major reason. Two more are Russian 1996 world bronze medalist Irina Slutskaya and compatriot Maria Butyrskaya. Bobek was 13th at the 1997 worlds.

Americans Kristi Yamaguchi, Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan swept 1991 world championship medals, but Japan's Midori Ito took silver behind Yamaguchi at the 1992 Games. Kerrigan was third and Harding fourth.

The knee clubbing of Kerrigan in a plot by Harding's ex-husband made a compelling comeback tale at the 1994 Games, but Kerrigan settled for silver behind Ukrainian orphan Oksana Baiul.

Women's comeback hopefuls for 1998 are Germany's Tanja Szewczenko, off the ice for 19 months

with illness and injury; France's Surya Bonaly coming off a tendon injury and China's Lu Chen coming off ankle injuries.

Expect youth to be served. Katarina Witt's 1988 Olympic title was the only one since 1964 won by a woman over age 20.

Quadruple jumps could decide the men's champion. Stojko, Kulik and Yagudin have landed them in competition. No American ever has, which could cost Eldredge dearly.

Kulik cut himself last August practicing a triple jump and was out for two weeks. But beating Stojko showed the 1996 world silver medalist has what it takes to win gold.

"I'm skating with more confidence," Kulik said. "Last year it was always a big fight for me. I wasn't strong enough. Now I have a good base in my free. When I miss something I have the confidence to go on."

Brian Boitano, the 1998 Olympic champion, said of Kulik, "He jumps

like a god."

Reigning Olympic champion Urmanov was undone by a nagging groin injury, but his example has inspired Yagudin, the 1997 world bronze medalist.

"I tried to copy my steps, spins and jumps after Urmanov. But now I want to have my own style. That's better for me," Yagudin said.

"For 1998 I want to skate very well, nothing more. My goal is to have a clean quad toe in my free skate program for Olympics and worlds. I want to have clean programs, to be perfect."

France's flamboyant Philippe Candoloro and Ukrainian Viacheslav Zagorodniuk could also contend for medals.

In pairs, Russia's Yelena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze beat world champion Germans Mandy Woetzel and Ingo Steuer at the Champions Series final and are emotional favorites.

Berezhnaya is recovering from brain surgery after nearly dying two years

ago when her former partner's blade sliced into her skull as they practiced side-by-side camel spins during a practice session. She spent a month in a Latvian hospital and had to re-learn how to talk.

But the Germans will be hard to beat and Russia's other duos, 1996 world champions Marina Elitsova and Andre Bushkov plus Oksana Kazakova and Artur Dmitriev, will challenge for gold as well.

Russia's Oksana Grishuk and Evgeny Platov, winners of the past four world ice dance titles, are unbeaten since the 1994 Olympics with 20 consecutive titles.

Russia's Anjelika Krylov and Oleg Ovsianikov, world runners-up the past two years, and Canada's Shae-Lynn Bourne and Victor Kraatz, world bronze medalists the past two years, will be pushed by French duos Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy plus Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat.

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THE PEACEMAKER		George Clooney Nicole Kidman... in THE PEACEMAKER		SCREAM		Nadya Al Jundi, Ahmad Bedeir & Nahla Salameh... in RIDING HIGH		ABDOUN		ABDOUN		THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE	
Shows: 12:30, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30		Robin Williams... in JACK		ROMEO & JULIET		Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas	
BULLET PROOF				BEVERLY HILLS NINJA		MR. BEAN		Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:45			
Shows: 12:30, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30				Shows: 12:00 2:00, 6:30		Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30							

Sports

Thailand's Tanasugarn mauls Majoli at Open; Sampras meets Arazzi

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Thailand's Tanasugarn was handed victory on a plate by French Open champion Iva Majoli in another day of upsets at the Australian Open tennis here Friday.

Tanasugarn, who carried the Thai flag at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, won the 65-minute third round match 6-0, 6-2 leaving Majoli smarting at her worst defeat.

Men's 11th seed Alex Corretja of Spain became the latest victim of French underdogs, going down 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 to Cedric Pioline.

Women's 13th seed Lisa Raymond also bowed out. World No. 1 Pete Sampras completed his third straight sets win of the Open against Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson — 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 — but could not match the drama of Tanasugarn's upset.

Majoli was devastated by her loss to the humble world number 44. "I am shocked," said the 20-year-old Croat. "I can't believe this really happened. I can't believe how badly I played."

The American-born Thai is now in the fourth round of a Grand Slam for the first time in five attempts. She will play ninth seed Sandrine Testud of France.

Thailand's best known sportswoman could not believe her luck, even after racing to take the first set in 23 minutes without conceding a game.

"Even when I was 3-1 up in the second set I did not really think I had a chance. I knew Iva could fight back at any time. She was not herself today," Tanasugarn said modestly.

Coached, mainly by her father, Tanasugarn trains in Bangkok with men because there are not enough women challengers at international level.



France's Cedric Pioline plays a forehand during his third round match against Spain's Alex Corretja at the Australian Open in Melbourne January 23. Pioline won in straight sets 6-2 6-1 6-4 (Reuters photo)



Pete Sampras of the United States signs autographs on centre court after his third round match against Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson. Sampras defeated Gustafsson 7-5 6-3 6-4 (Reuters photo)

Her aim now is to boost her world ranking to get a better draw for the Asian Games where she will be honoured again by lighting the ceremonial flame.

Another female seeded casualty was Raymond, who lost 2-6, 6-3, 8-6 to Switzerland's Patty Schnyder.

Spain's Corretja was the ninth men's seed in five days to fold. Pioline is the third unranked Frenchman to boot out one of the top 16 competitors, after Guillaume Raoux and Nicolas Escude.

But Pioline warned against celebrating a French resurgence too soon. "Last night I congratulated them. They were good victories but I told them 'you must not celebrate too soon' there is a long way to go."

Pioline next plays sixth seed Petr Korda of the Czech Republic, who marked his 30th birthday by beating American Vince Spadea 6-2, 7-6 (10-8), 6-2 and then warned this could be his last year on the tour.

"My clock is now at five to midnight and I am just going to enjoy every minute," Defending champion Sampras put himself in virtual auto pilot to cruise past Gustafsson, the World No. 38, in straight sets. The American will now play Moroccan Hicham Arazzi in the fourth round.



Spain's Conchita Martinez catches her racket during her third round match against France's Anne-Gaëlle Sidot at the Australian Open in Melbourne January 23. Martinez won in three sets 3-6 6-0 6-3 (Reuters photo)

accounted for Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4. Women's second seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States beat Flora Perfetti of Italy 6-2, 6-2. Her next match is against 15th seed Ruxandra Dragomir of Romania.

Exciting American youngster Venus Williams eased into the next round with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over Amelie Mauresmo of France 6-1, 6-4. But she may take time off from tennis to go back to school next year, even if she achieves of ambition of deposing Martina Hingis as world number one this year.

Eighth seed Conchita Martinez of Spain beat Anne-Gaëlle Sidot of France 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the main evening singles match.

Wihdat retain Jordan Cup, clinch 3 of 4 titles

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The 1997 soccer season was concluded Friday evening after Al Wihdat retained the Jordan Cup title following a hard-fought 2-1 win over Al Ramtha.

Jihad Abdul Mun'em scored his team's winning goal in the dying minutes of the match attended by over 20,000 fans.

It was the third title of the year for Al Wihdat who earlier this month clinched the Premier League title for the fourth consecutive year and had won the season-opening Cup Winners' Cup leaving only the Federation Shield title for Al Faisali.

Al Wihdat had beat Al Hussein 1-0 to reach the semifinals, while Al Ramtha had knocked out Al Faisali also by the same score.

Championship record (runner-up in brackets)

1980	Faisali (Baqaa)
1981	Faisali (Ramtha)
1982	Wihdat (Ramtha)
1983	Faisali (Ramtha)
1984	Jazireh (Ahli)
1985	Wihdat (Faisali)
1986	Arabi (Jazireh)
1987	Faisali (Husseini)
1988	Wihdat (Faisali)
1989	Faisali (Ramtha)
1990	Ramtha (Husseini)
1991	Ramtha (Wihdat)
1992	Faisali
1993	Faisali (Ramtha)
1994	Faisali (Ramtha)
1995	Faisali (Ramtha)
1996	Wihdat (Ramtha)
1997	Wihdat (Ramtha)

Al Ramtha last won the title in 1990-1991 seasons and have been finalists for the past five years. They were looking to win the title to secure one of the season's four titles.

Al Wihdat met Al

Ramtha three times in the Jordan Cup final with Al Wihdat winning in 1982, Al Ramtha in 1991 and Al Wihdat in 1996.

Forty one teams representing the Premier League as well as the First and Second Divisions initially took part in the Jordan Cup divided into four groups.

Al Faisali are the Jordan Cup record holders with 9 titles in the past 18 years. Al Ramtha were runners-up nine times and won it two consecutive years (see table).

Premier League teams have dominated the title except for 1986 when Al Arabi won the title.

Titleholders Al Wihdat have won it five times and Al Jazireh once.

Packers block Elway's path to elusive NFL crown

SAN DIEGO (AFP) — John Elway's path to Super Bowl redemption on Sunday runs through a mighty Packers team eager to live up to Green Bay's legendary past.

Elway has taken his Denver Broncos to American football's championship game three times, losing to the New York Giants, Washington Redskins and San Francisco 49ers by a combined score of 136-40.

After an absence of seven years, Denver returns to the Super Bowl with its strongest team ever, only to face the defending champion Packers, led by three-time NFL Most Valuable Player Brett Favre.

Favre passed for 346 yards and two touchdowns and ran for another score in Green Bay's 35-21 over New England last January in Super Bowl 31 in New Orleans. It was the 12th National Football League title for Green Bay, and the first for the Packers since Super Bowl 2 in 1968.

After waiting 29 years to reclaim the Lombardi Trophy, named after Packers legendary coach Vince Lombardi, Green Bay will not be ready to hand the hardware to Elway.

"We'll be one of seven teams that's ever won two in a row if we can accomplish it," said Green Bay defensive end Reggie White, although he added the Packers can't afford to look to history just yet.

"You think about that after you can accomplish it," he said. "We've got to win."

The thing that should motivate you is the Denver Broncos. If they don't motivate you enough to want to go out there and win, then you can't get motivated."

The last club to win back-to-back Super Bowls was Dallas in 1992 and 1993. The only team to repeat twice was the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1974-75 and 1978-79.

Green Bay is going for its second back-to-back, having won Super Bowls I and II under Lombardi.

Current coach Mike Holmgren said repeating was harder than winning the first one.

"When you try to repeat, it's hard to enjoy every win because the expectations are so high," said Holmgren.

White agreed, recalling the Packers' early season struggles as they felt the pressure of defending the title.

"It was much harder this year," White said. "Playing the first seven games was a real struggle for us."

While the Packers are a perfect 3-0 in Super Bowls, the Broncos are 0-4, including three losses with Elway in a four-year span.

The last was the most lopsided Super Bowl in history, a 55-10 drubbing to San Francisco in 1990.

Elway completed only 10 of 26 passes for 108 yards

with two interceptions while San Francisco's flawless Joe Montana threw five touchdowns.

Ten years ago, San Diego was also the host city as Denver fell to the Washington Redskins. Denver led 10-0 after the first quarter, then were left helpless as the Redskins scored 35 points in the second quarter to win 42-10.

For Elway, 37 and in his 15th NFL season, this is likely his last chance at a Super Bowl.

Favre, 28, is in his prime and is without question the dominant quarterback in the league.

"He's such a great player and I know he badly wants to win the Super Bowl," Favre said. "But I want to win my second one badly, too."

Elway admits that he lacks some of his former physical ability, but he threw a career-high 27 touchdowns this season.

"What I've lost in physical ability," Elway said, "I've made up mentally."

And he is surrounded by the most balanced offense he has ever enjoyed, with a strong offensive line, running back Terrell Davis and tight end Shannon Sharpe.

"This is the best football team I've been on here," Elway said. "And, hopefully, we've saved our best for last."

BMW Group Increases Worldwide Sales by 4% to Almost 1.2 Million Cars

The BMW Group has announced a worldwide increase in sales for 1997 of 4 per cent, amounting to almost 1.2 million cars, and a 7 per cent increase in the delivery of BMW motorcycles to more than 53,500 customers (50,465 for 1996). Group automobile sales for 1996, including BMW, Rover, Land Rover, Mini and MG brands, totalled 1,151,361 units.

According to the provisional figures announced during the recent Detroit Motor Show by Dr. Heinrich Heilmann, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BMW (U.S.) Holdings, deliveries of BMW cars totalled around 675,000 units, thus exceeding the previous year's figures (644,107) by close to 5 per cent. The Rover Group supplied around 523,000 cars to customers — 3 per cent more than in 1996 (507,254).

In the USA, BMW was able to maintain its position as the leading importer of luxury cars in 1997.

In Germany, BMW stabilised sales at the high level of the previous year (227,542).

BMW and Rover Group were able to increase sales further outside their respective home markets of Germany and the United Kingdom.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Jordanian-American Commission for Educational Exchange (The Binational Fulbright Commission) wishes to announce that, effective 1 February 1998, the "Fulbright House" telephone numbers will change to:

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Palestinians fear 'Monicagate conspiracy' on peace process

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinians said on Friday they were worried that a new sex scandal besetting U.S. President Bill Clinton may distract him from trying to end the deadlock in Middle East peace talks.

Some Palestinians, including Islamists, even saw the scandal as a "Zionist conspiracy" to give Israel an easy ride.

Mr. Clinton was unable to bridge the gap between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat when he met them separately in Washington this week.

His talks with Mr. Arafat on Thursday were overshadowed by allegations that Mr. Clinton had an affair in 1995 with a then 21-year-old White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, and later told her to lie about it. Mr. Clinton denies the allegations.

Palestinians and other Arabs hoped Mr. Clinton's personal intervention would pave the

way for progress but the Palestinian press said his mind was on other affairs.

Al Quds newspaper ran a cartoon showing a large television with a picture of a smiling Ms. Lewinsky under the words "Monicagate" on the screen, overshadowing a smaller television that had the words "peace process" on its screen.

"The exposure of this scandal does not seem to have happened coincidentally but it is a plot aimed at weakening Mr. Clinton or destroying his future," said Ashraf Al Agrami in Al Ayyam daily.

"The timing at which it [the scandal] appeared raised many question marks. Why did it come at the end of Mr. Clinton's meetings with Mr. Netanyahu and before his meeting with Mr. Arafat?"

"Whatever the truth behind what is happening in the United States, it has been proven without a doubt that this administration is not

about to give serious help to solving the Palestinian-Israeli problems," Mr. Agrami added.

Palestinian officials were more cautious in their comments.

"I hope that these internal problems do not affect the official, adopted U.S. policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian issue," Ahmad Abdel Rahman, secretary general of the Palestinian cabinet, said.

"We do not give an opinion on these problems because we do not interfere in such matters that concern the United States, its administration and its laws but we believe the U.S. policy is that of an institution and not the policy of an individual."

The fact that Ms. Lewinsky is Jewish and that the scandal erupted just before Mr. Clinton was to meet Mr. Arafat had some Palestinians crying conspiracy.

"The Zionist lobby and world Zionism create disasters

for anyone who may cause it problems," said Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

"Its aim is to prevent the U.S. president from exerting pressure on Israel so they pushed him into the sex trap so that if he turned to them for help they would say: 'One thing for another. Don't exert pressure on Israel and we will rid you of this problem,'" he added.

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed last March when Israel broke ground on a new Jewish settlement in occupied Arab east Jerusalem. Hamas suicide bombings in Israel deepened the peace stalemate.

Mr. Clinton has urged Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat to trade a gradual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank for tougher Palestinian security actions, according to U.S. officials.

Arafat stays away from U.S. Holocaust museum

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat decided not to visit the Holocaust museum in Washington on Friday after the museum reversed an earlier snub and agreed to give him VIP treatment, a Palestinian official said.

Mr. Arafat would leave Washington Friday and would "not be visiting the museum," Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told AFP in Jerusalem from

Washington without giving reasons for the decision.

The museum commemorating the Holocaust of Jews by the Nazis agreed Tuesday to give Mr. Arafat VIP treatment if he visited the museum during his stay in Washington after an uproar over its earlier refusal to grant the veteran PNA leader a special welcome.

Last week museum officials had said they would tell Mr. Arafat to "stand in

line with everyone else," angering U.S. officials who had proposed Mr. Arafat conduct the visit as a gesture to Jews.

Mr. Arafat was in Washington for two meetings on Thursday with U.S. President Bill Clinton following a similar meeting Tuesday between Mr. Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Failed Israeli satellite was meant to spy — reports

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli satellite that malfunctioned after launch on Thursday and burned up was meant to spy on Iran, Iraq and Syria, Israeli media said on Friday.

Maariv newspaper quoted defence sources as saying the loss of the Ofek 4, launched in a cloak of secrecy from a military site in central Israel, had cost the country \$50 million.

It was the second hi-tech failure for Israel's defence establishment in less than six months following an aborted test last August of the country's Arrow 2 missile-killing missile.

Security sources said the satellite, manufactured by state-owned Israel Aircraft Industries, malfunctioned and failed to achieve orbit.

The reason for the failure was not clear but Maariv cited technical problems in one of the satellite's systems as a likely cause.

"The assessment at this stage is that the programme will continue despite the difficult technological and financial problems," Israel Radio said in a report by its military correspondent.

The Ofek 4 was meant to replace Israel's first opera-

tional reconnaissance satellite, the Ofek 3, which has been in space for more than two years and is now reaching the end of its life. Maariv and Israel Radio said both satellites had been built to spy on Iran, Iraq and Syria but that unlike its predecessor, the Ofek 4 had been designed to relay all-weather photographic intelligence back to Israel in real time.

They cited "foreign news reports" for the information, a formula Israeli journalists often use to avoid censorship.

Military censors barred publication of the launch for nine hours on Thursday. Witnesses saw a long blazing trail in the sky and then a white plume over central Israel after the satellite was launched by an Israeli Shavit rocket shortly before 3 p.m. local time.

Israel accelerated its spy satellite programme after the 1991 Gulf war, when Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israeli cities.

Israel launched experimental prototypes of the Ofek in 1988 and 1990. Ofek 2 was sent up in April 1990, one day after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein

threatened to destroy "half of Israel with chemical weapons if the Jewish state took part in an attack on Baghdad."

Then Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens said after the Gulf war that Israel could not rely on its chief ally Washington for satellite intelligence data and needed a military spy satellite of its own.

Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel in 1991 also spurred development of the Arrow, which is being developed at a projected cost of \$1.6 billion to intercept missiles between 10 kilometres and 40 kilometres above the ground.

The missile, jointly financed by Israel and the United States, is expected to be operational by the end of 1998.

A test of the Arrow was halted in mid-flight last August when it deviated from its path and went out of control.

The failure intensified doubts about the Arrow among some defence experts, who have questioned both the effectiveness and the cost of the system.

Isolated Vanunu to receive computer, one-way phone calls from lawyer

TEL AVIV (AP) — Nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu, who has been held in solitary confinement for 11 years, will receive a computer and a phone, prison officials said Friday.

However, Mr. Vanunu will not be able to receive and send messages on the computer, and the phone will only have an incoming line so his lawyer can call, the prisons authority said.

Mr. Vanunu, a former

Zucker visited Mr. Vanunu in Ashkelon prison in southern Israel on Thursday and said he found the prisoner alert and eager to discuss politics.

However, Mr. Vanunu showed signs of being affected by the solitary confinement, said Mr. Zucker. "He is still in total isolation," Mr. Zucker said. "That's what he asked me to say outside, that Israel is staining its democracy by

were not set by a court, but by the Shin Bet security service. The Shin Bet, which censors Mr. Vanunu's letters, apparently fears that Mr. Vanunu will talk to others about Israel's nuclear programme.

Mr. Vanunu, 43, is serving an 18-year sentence for treason. He was kidnapped by Mossad in Rome in 1986 after giving the Sunday Times of London photographs of the inside of the

Swedish deputy FM to visit Mideast

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Sweden's Deputy Foreign Minister Pierre Schori will visit Israel and the Palestinian territories for four days starting Sunday to hold talks with top officials, the foreign ministry said Friday.

During his visit, Mr. Schori, who is also aid minister, will sign a cooperation agreement with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) worth \$26.2 million for the period 1998-1999.

He will also meet with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Education Minister Hanan Ashrawi, chief Mideast peace negotiator Saeb Erekat and Faisal Hussein, a member of the Palestinian Executive Committee responsible for issues concerning Jerusalem.

Mr. Schori will also visit Bethlehem.

In Israel, Mr. Schori will hold talks with representatives for the government and the Labour Party, though no specific details were available.

Denktash threatens to 'break wings' of Greek fighter planes

NICOSIA (AFP) — Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash threatened to "break the wings" of Greek fighter planes if they used a new airbase in southern Cyprus, the Turkish-Cypriot newspaper Kibris reported Friday.

"The planes which will take off from Paphos will not be able to find anywhere to land... Their wings will be quickly broken," said Mr. Denktash, adding that it was a "mad and hostile investment" by the Greek Cypriots.

His comments came as Turkish forces in northern Cyprus were put on alert ahead of the opening of the new airbase, informed sources told AFP Friday.

Turkish troops have reinforced positions along the 180-km U.N.-patrolled green line dividing the island before the inauguration of the airbase near the southern city of Paphos on Saturday, said the sources.

Tension on the island has been steadily mounting since



MAKING HISTORY: Pope John Paul II is assisted by Cuban President Fidel Castro at the Palace of the Revolution in Havana, Thursday. The Pope is on a historic five-day visit to the communist country (AP photo)

John Paul takes message of faith to Cuba's young

CAMAGUEY (AP) — After winning a promise from Fidel Castro to consider freeing some Cuban prisoners, Pope John Paul II was taking his message of faith Friday to a younger generation raised under communism.

Tens of thousands of flag-waving Cubans welcomed the Pope as he arrived in a broad plaza in Camaguey, an old eastern city of colourful colonial buildings, 500 km south-east of Havana. The Pope was giving a mass and a homily about youth.

Cuba's younger generation has been embracing religion in increasing numbers, especially since the Castro government renounced atheism as its official doctrine in 1992 and erased the social stigma of being a believer. While Cuba's population is ageing, congregations at Catholic and Protestant churches appear disproportionately young.

In the palm tree-lined plaza to the right of the altar stage, was a bas relief featuring images of Mr. Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara and other heroes of the 1959 revolution that swept the communists into power.

A 16-year-old participant in the mass, Santiago Valdemama, described Cuba's youth as "really lost."

"We've got to do what we can to rescue it. That's why we're here," he said. Mr. Valdemama was among those selected to distribute communion.

The Pope also was scheduled to celebrate outdoor masses in Santiago de Cuba on Saturday and in Havana on Sunday.

On Thursday, after the Pope met privately with Mr. Castro, the Vatican announced that

Cuban officials agreed to consider freeing some prisoners who had sought the Pope's intercession.

Pope spokesman Joaquín Navarro-Valls did not disclose the number of prisoners involved or whether they included any of the nearly 500 political prisoners that Cuban dissidents say are held.

The Pope and Mr. Castro met at sunset and talked privately for about 30 minutes in the Palace of the Revolution in Havana. There was no word on what they discussed.

Entering and leaving the meeting, John Paul walked slowly with the help of a cane down a red carpet. Mr. Castro slowed his step to the Pope's pace.

"[See] how we are after 70-and-something years?" the Pope said to Mr. Castro.

Earlier in the day, amid the lilting, romantic beat of maracas and drums, the pontiff celebrated mass in the provincial city of Santa Clara, appealing for sexual morality and restoration of Catholic education.

"The family, the school and the church must form an educational community in which the children of Cuba can 'grow in humanity.' Do not be afraid: open your families and schools to the values of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which are never a threat to any social project," the Pope said.

The government has embraced the Pope's visit in a calculated risk that it will improve its image with a display of openness without encouraging too much dissent.

It is devoting hours of live television time to papal events and helping transport tens of thousands of people, given time off work at state jobs, to

masses.

What viewers saw Thursday was an outpouring of deep emotion and affection for the 77-year-old pontiff, who flew in for a half day in the heartland city of Santa Clara, 260 km east of Havana.

In his homily, John Paul denounced systems "which, under the guise of freedom and progress, promote or even defend an anti-birth mentality."

Abortion is free of charge and available on demand in Cuba, which long has had one of the world's highest abortion rates.

"Abortion... is always, in addition to being an abominable crime, a senseless impoverishment of the person and of society itself," the pontiff said.

In recent years, Cuban officials have accelerated a campaign to discourage abortions. They say the rate — once one abortion for every live birth — has been cut in half.

John Paul drew the most enthusiastic reaction from the Santa Clara crowd when he called for restoration of Catholic education in Cuba, where Catholic schools were closed in the early 1960s.

The government has certain rights in education, the Pope acknowledged, but "this does not give public authority the right to take the place of parents."

The message not to be afraid resonated with some Catholics in the nation that up until six years ago was officially atheist.

"I had no fear of anything," said Noel Arteaga Carpio, 30, a barber. "Here, that is something that is more than rare."



Swiss order pimp to pay damages to prostitute

GENEVA (R) — A Swiss court has ordered a Geneva pimp to pay tens of thousands of dollars in damages to a prostitute who said he was taking nearly all of her pay. The pimp was ordered to pay nearly \$110,000, including interest on lost revenue — after the prostitute accused him of taking 90 per cent of her income. A spokesman at the Geneva cantonal court said it was the first time in the city that a pimp had been ordered to pay damages to a prostitute. "It could encourage similar cases," the spokesman said.

To Russia with poo

LONDON (R) — British conservationists are flying 32 jars of zoo poo to Russia in an effort to find out how many tigers are left in the world. Sarah Christie, London Zoo's tiger expert, said she was collecting the samples to test if special sniffer dogs trained in Russia could accurately tell whose excrement they were sniffing. If the dogs pass the test, conservationists could for the first time accurately determine the size of the world's shrinking tiger population. "I've travelled with semen, a sea-lion and all kinds of weird stuff in my time but I've never crossed borders with bags full of tiger poo," said Christie. "Let's hope customs understand."

Indian auto official raise standards, drop skirts

NEW DELHI (R) — India's leading industrial association will ban models from wearing mini skirts at its celebrated car show because it finds hemlines are going too high and standards of taste too low. "We cannot let things go on like this. You do not need sex to sell cars in India," the United Nations of India quoted Pran Talwar, chairman of the confederation of Indian industry's trade fairs committee, as saying. "From the next fair onwards... no short skirts, no provocative dances," Talwar said. "You are allowed to make the hostesses stand next to the car but making them jig is taking it a bit too far."

Australian charged with driving camels while drunk

PERTH (R) — An Australian bushman has been charged with drunk driving of a camel cart. Ricky Hall, 35, allegedly tried to flee police near the outback town of Oodnadatta after being told he was too drunk to drive a cart drawn by two camels. Hall danced on the cart before riding off on a third camel, hurling abuse at a police officer as he galloped away, police said. However, the camel soon returned Hall to police who subdued him with pepper spray.

Canadians develop marijuana board game

TORONTO (R) — Marijuana cultivation is turning a legal profit for two Canadian developers of a board game about the illegal practice. The pair have created "The Cultivation Game," which pokes fun at the multi-million-dollar marijuana industry in British Columbia, after hearing about the numerous problems with cultivating the

Turkey's security forces employed criminals to fight PKK — report

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's security forces used criminal groups as illegal state death squads in its fight against Kurdish separatists, an official government report has revealed.

The report, made public on television late Thursday, said the groups were used by the government of the time — a coalition between former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and the now-banned Islamist Welfare Party — and

crashed in western Turkey, killing a wanted crime boss, Abdullah Catli, and a senior police chief.

A third man in the same vehicle, a Kurdish parliamentary deputy from Ms. Ciller's True Path Party, was seriously injured.

The incident, which exposed links between police, politicians and organised crime, created uproar in Turkey and led to the resignation of the then-interior minister, Mehmet Agar.

Once he took over the premiership, Mr. Yilmaz ordered top inspector Kulu Savas to probe the affair.

Commenting on the report on television Sunday, Mr. Yilmaz said: "It's an unprecedented scandal. Major investigations will be started to get to the bottom of all this."

He added that the intelligence service will be restructured and state banks will be involved in the probes to see if they had any role. Parts of Mr. Savas' report